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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

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THE DEAR GIRL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," &c.

CHAPTER XX. THE CHARMING BEAUFORTS.

MEANWHILE the Dieppe colony went on in its old course, and was very busy watching the Guernsey Beauforts and their doings. Wilkinson, or Beaufort, was the name most frequently on people's lips. The latter gave little dinners, ordered with exquisite taste from Chabot's. Many of the English used to get in a joint or so, on a man's head, from "Shabow the Restywrong's;" but the Beaufort dinners were the subject of envy and desire. The limit was rigidly fixed at ten persons, one of which select band Mr. Blacker usually contrived to be. They were charming little feasts, and the air of mystery and selection lent a fresh attraction to them. It was known that Mr. Blacker had full powers to stop and retain any flying person of distinction—a Sir Thomas, and even an Honourable Charles. His air of importance increased daily. He was always seen hurrying by express on business.

"My good sir," he would say to a friend inquiring for admission, "I can't get you to a dinner. We can't do that sort of thing, you know. I dare say, now, we could manage you in the evening."

Who would have now known the charming Edith Wilkinson, née Edith M'Gregor, the simple parson's daughter? Certainly not one of her six gauche sisters, still unmarried, at home. She had begun already to "take airs." She wrote home—and not very often—the most brilliant accounts of "the society here." "We are thinking of staying altogether, instead of going on;" in which, too, the simple rustic sisters seemed to read with wonder that Edith was admired and followed by every one. They could not understand, or make it out. They marvelled much at the Mr. Beaufort whose name figured so often. The Wilkinson, as Captain Filby called her, was at all the select dinners; so was the pink gentleman, her husband, whose importance had vastly increased from the attentions paid to his wife. The foolish lady seemed to grow proud of her conquest, and was seen everywhere on the arm of Mr. Ernest Beaufort. In these places, and in our more modern watering-places, where gambling establishments prevail, it is almost comic to see how quickly the simple and innocent fall into the lax tone of the place, and, so to speak, out-Herod their neighbours. They are fascinated by the novelty and brilliancy, and by the contrast to their own home manners, having a confidence in their excellent training.

Our Lucy, who indeed at this time was living within a golden cloud that hung before her eyes and encompassed her about, beheld all her friend's behaviour through the same dreamy medium. She admired Mr. Beaufort, and saw everything that was generous and chivalrous in him, admiring him the more "because he had shown himself above the vile whispers of the mean creatures about." On this principle, too, she was always with her friend in public places, and the five—Miss Lucy and Vivian, Mrs. Wilkinson and Mr. Beaufort, and "Harco"—made up a little party at public places—at the port, for instance, where the town gathered. Our Lucy delighted in thus bearding the colony, and, it must be added, "her enemy," as she now considered Mr. West, whose eyes, she fancied, followed her proceedings with grave disapproval. That unhappy gentleman, living now in a mental fever—restless, disturbed, miserable—seemed to find relief in eagerly watching that party. From the same reason, as a sort of bitter defiance to the dear girl, he had found himself drawn into a disapproval of the Beaufort party. "She takes them up," he morbidly brooded, "on purpose, because she sees that I know what sort of people they are. I can read the challenge in her eye. What folly, what wickedness, to encourage that poor country lady in her foolishness, all to spite me! I will frustrate such wickedness. She may do what she pleases to me; but I will not look on and see innocence ruined, all for a girl's freak." It seemed to him that duty was calling on him to act. Long after, as he looked back to this season and to the whirl of agitation in which he lived, he thought with wonder of his state.

Cousin Constance, infinitely more sensible than his sister Margaret, tried to soothe him. But when the three were together, his sister, excited at the change that was slowly working in him, unconsciously inflamed his state

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by dwelling on the details of this affair. Constance, coming from the convent where she was learning French, would contrive to meet him. This he abstractedly would set down to pure accident. Then would follow a walk, in which she, with some art, invited him to the subject of his troubles. She found his bitter complaints of the place and its society did him good.

"I know what the plan on foot now is," he would say, excitedly. "Only fancy—to let that poor young girl be sacrificed among these wretches, all because they think it will annoy me. It is shocking; is it not? But it shall not take place. I know about them—more than they think."

He had known the squire, and he thought him a simple, foolish, but good man, who would be sure to take fright at a warning, or even a hint. "I have only to say a word. Though, indeed, if we were to set about exposing all the impostors that come into this place, where would it end?"

Constance, though admiring everything he did or even proposed, could not restrain the look of distress that came into her face. "Don't do that," she said, imploringly. "Oblige me in that one little thing."

"Why?" he asked, smiling at her earnestness.

"Because it will lead to mischief. They will combine against you, and make a party; for they are such cruel, unscrupulous people, and stick at nothing. Dearest cousin, do this one little thing for me. I know I am foolish; but I would not see you more unhappy than—I mean unhappy, that is——"

"Unhappy," he said. "Well, now I *do* think you are a foolish cousin, and you must think me an empty, childish man indeed. Unhappy. Why? No. I am interested, and therefore should be happy. Unhappy because a light, not overwise girl, whose father, as they say, I am old enough to be, has chosen to play off her girlish tricks on me? No, no; we shall wait to see the end, whatever that end may be."

"Poor foolish unhappy child," said she, with real sympathy. "I feel a conviction it will not end as she wishes—that Vivian will never marry her."

"You think so?" he said, eagerly. "So do I—so do I. These soldiers are not of the marrying mind. I could tell her half a dozen instances myself of disappointment; but she is impatient. We will know very soon; for he will get orders to join his regiment, and then the thing *must* be decided one way or other."

That evening he went up to the squire, who had quite lost his timorous air of gratitude for being noticed, and had actually grown pompous, with an air of business and importance. Mr. West, perhaps, was not the most skilful negotiator; but he was in earnest. He quietly said: "You are a great deal with those Beauforts, and I suppose know all about them and their family?" The other thought, foolishly, that his interest was about being sought for one of the little dinners.

"Oh, I know them very well," he said, pompously. "We are quite a set together, you know; but really I have made it a rule not to make any request of them. Blacker settles everything for them."

"They say they are from Staffordshire, I think," went on Mr. West, taking no notice of Wilkinson's disclaimer.

"Oh dear yes," said the other. "Beaufort Manor is one of the show places; charming people they are."

"No doubt; but to places of this sort many charming people come whose account of themselves is their only guarantee. You see, Mr. Wilkinson, you have not been abroad before, and—one learns to be very cautious.

The other's face grew red. "I don't understand. I know as much—and can take care of myself as other men. What do you mean? I am sure——"

"Are you sure," said the other, "that they are the Beauforts of that show place you spoke of?"

"Of course they are. We are to go there and spend a month when they go back. What on earth are you insinuating?"

"Because," said Mr. West, a little imprudently, "I heard in London that those very Beauforts have no children."

"I am sure I don't know," said the other, impatiently. "One can hear plenty of idle stories in London, if one only listens to them. I don't understand."

Wilkinson went away fuming, but a little troubled. The first person he met was Mr. Dacres, who sang out to him cheerfully, with his hand extended:

> "Ah, hermit so grey, and so reverend too,
> Tell me what pain is this at my heart!

Well, my troubadour, how is the bewitching Mrs. W. to-day?"

"She is gone to drive with the Beauforts. By the way," he said, doubtfully, "wouldn't you say those Beauforts were what you call all right?"

"God bless me," said Mr. Dacres, quickly, "have they blown up? Are they gone off? Have they, too, levanted?"

"Not at all," said Wilkinson, testily; "but I just parted from that Mr. West there, and he had some story about the real Beauforts having no children."

"Oh, that was it," said Mr. Dacres, thoughtfully; "that came from West, did it? My gentleman says more than his prayers. Methinks, knowing what I do of that party, that I should leave the case to any jury (not a French one, of course), and they'd give their opinion of him without turning round in the box. My opinion, sir, of the said Mr. West is so—well—not so high as it was."

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"Just what I thought," said the other, greatly relieved. "And living as they do so handsomely—in the first style——"

"Yes. Look at the way they entertain us—another of the little dinners to-morrow. Charmingly done. I have dined, sir, with some of the merchant princes at Liverpool, when our bigwigs were down there, and they did not come near it. Mr. West is a little too fond of busying himself about other people's affairs. It is unworthy and shabby, sir. If I were called on to advise, I should say that an action for damages would lie. But there is a reason—every reason, sir—not on the pleadings at present."

Quite satisfied, the squire went his way. Mr. Dacres, for all his pleasant qualities, had "a bitter drop" in him, and adopted a curious sneering tone towards Mr. West. Perhaps his own acuteness told him the true state of the case as to Lucy's behaviour, and he thought this was the best way of taking it. He was also, no doubt, enjoying the friendship of Vivian on the same profitable terms he had done West's generosity—or, at least, this was charitably given out. Some such little tax was always to be paid for the pleasure of Mr. Dacres's intimacy. He soon told his own family, as well as Vivian, who was present, of what he called "West's underhand stab," which was unworthy and unhandsome, and he was afraid could be only too readily explained.

The scorn with which Lucy endorsed this view trembled on her lip, and flashed in her eye. "Yes, papa, I can explain it. He finds his enmity to be powerless, and now he thinks to reach me through my friends. I did not think he would stoop so low. Such a poor vulgar story! A bit of gossip from London. There may be fifty Beaufort families. They told Mr. Wilkinson they had relations all over the kingdom."

Vivian smiled. "You are a most enthusiastic champion of those people. We must all admit their perfection. Still, I don't *quite* believe in them."

"Ah, *there* is an honourable open hostility! How different that is to stabbing in the dark! It is unworthy, unmanly," she said, with a defiant look and toss of her head, "and I shall take care to show him that his secret insinuations have no effect on my friendship."

"I say, Vivian," said Dacres, with a wink, "isn't that like Miss O'Neil in the play? Wouldn't Lulu draw at the Français? She'd be worth a hundred francs a night, sir, at the least."

How strange this change and hostility to Gilbert West! Yet Lucy did not dislike him; nay, at times, pitied and liked him; but these sudden impulses were part of her character. They bore her away with them. Every one, therefore, remarked the renewed and all but exaggerated intimacy between Lulu and her slandered friends. Every one, too, saw her stop before Mr. West on the port, with Mrs. Wilkinson beside her, and say to him with a haughty look—and Captain Filby heard her say it—"Now, Mr. West, you see what effect your message has had upon me. I congratulate you on your new arts." Then Mr. Ernest Beaufort came up, and with him she walked away ostentatiously. Everybody knew how that "moody West" had tried to invent a clumsy story about the Beauforts—a shocking instance of impotent spite—and was full of Mr. Guernsey Beaufort's capital way of taking it. So good tempered and gentlemanly:

"My dear ma'am, I shan't take the least notice of it. It is beneath me. In town there is a story about every one, once a week. Only better not tell Ernest, who is a little hot in his temper." And there was infinite art to be used, and chiefly by Miss Lulu's cleverness and tact, that young Beaufort was to be kept from hearing the slander.

Yet West, whose life now was working in a round of this morbid struggle, said to himself, "She shall not put me down in that way. I will live to open her eyes;" and wrote off to his legal friend in England a feverish letter, imploring him to work the thing out and find the truth, and let him know. After that, let him come over and bring proofs; *he* would pay all—any expense.

"Poor West," said the legal friend, reading, "what has come over him? He's quite excited."

CHAPTER XXI. "ON HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE."

The entire colony wondered at the eagerness with which West began to mix in what he had once called the foolish shows of the place, being now most anxious never to miss the Corso, or the packet coming in, or the little parties in the small rooms of the place; any scene, in short, where he might have a chance of seeing the pair whose movements were now his life.

One night Vivian had come across the street, to spend one of those evenings which were so delightful for Lucy. Indeed, this school-girl had now found herself set free in a new and charming domain, a delicious garden abounding in the rarest scents of flowers, and could not restrain her joy and sense of happiness. She did not look back to the past, as one older would have done; she had not yet learned the value of the little excuses and pretences common in life, and she accepted with complete faith the arrangement proposed by Gilbert West. Had he not proposed to leave it all to her? She was to take time to know her own mind, and all that. She knew it now—oh, how splendidly! In the very young there is always a little of this cruel selfishness, or thoughtlessness. Her father not unadroitly aided this view—as he did on this night.

"Poor West! he glares at me when I meet

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him as if he was going to eat me. A good, sober, sensible man, no doubt, and I am sure will pick up a widow, of a suitable age, one of these days, who'll make him very comfortable." Lucy smiled. Alas! that smile showed how the old image had gone. "I think," went on Mr. Dacres, in great spirits, "he has been reading that old novel of Miss What's-her-name's, where the tutor thinks he has inspired the sweet girl, his pupil, with a tender and reverential interest. My poor Lulu! fancy her being handed over to a professor of this sort, to be lectured every morning, and have her mind formed!"

Again Lucy laughed. When laughter comes in at the door, love has flown out of the window. Vivian, with his eyes on her, talked about himself; and presently Mr. Dacres, finding love-making monotonous to an uninterested bystander, slipped out quietly for a few minutes to get a breath of fresh air. The fresh air that invigorated Mr. Dacres was that of the café at the corner, so fatally near his residence. Then Vivian and Lucy began the old, old duet. Long since, as the reader will have guessed, they had settled everything. To Lucy Vivian had been more explicit than to her father; she understood how he was situated perfectly. He had not many friends in the world: one brother, also in the army—no father nor mother—a pair of wandering men, like many soldiers that we meet, whose family is the regiment. For that case we may have sympathy. There was just one relation, then very ill and lingering near death, on whom much depended; and Lucy understood that any further steps were not to be taken until this matter had come to an issue. She had formed her own ideal of this awful lady; for she saw that Vivian shrank from her very name, and would not speak of her. A terrible relation, who had much in her power. Mr. Dacres, having looked after Vivian's affairs through the agency of his own solicitor in England, found everything satisfactory; so much money in the funds to his credit—all plain sailing, as he said. There was no hurry. Let matters shake themselves free. At Vivian's, or rather Lucy's earnest request, no official intimation of an engagement was given. But it was guessed at, and all but known; Mr. Dacres always rubbing his hands gleefully, and saying he supposed the young people would knock out something of the kind one of these days. It wasn't *his* affair.

Dacres had scarcely departed, when Madame Jaques came tripping over, in great delight, with a packet in her hand. As we have mentioned, she took an unbounded interest in the progress of his affairs, and thought Vivian as handsome and as noble a gentleman as ever bore a sword. A hero, too, who saved gallant men for their wives and families.

"I was passing the post, monsieur," she said, "and I thought I would ask if there was a letter. The bon Dieu, I think, inspired me, for they gave me this. There must be wonderful news in it—it is so large."

Vivian opened it hurriedly. It was a long despatch, and labelled "On his Majesty's Service." When the pretty Madame Jaques had gone, Lucy saw his troubled air. He rose hastily.

"No bad news, dear?" she said, anxiously.

"My sweet Lucy," he said, "the worst. There is some trouble expected in one of the islands, and here is the fatal order to join the regiment by the first ship that sails. What *shall* we do?"

Lucy was very pale.

"It is not so bad as I thought; but it is very bad. And you *must* go?"

"Yes," he said, "if I was ill or dying, I dared not hesitate. Alas! what shall we do?"

"And when," said she, anxiously, "does the vessel sail?"

"In five weeks," he said.

"Ah," said Lucy, cheerfully, "that is a long reprieve. I was afraid it was to-morrow, or next day."

"Yes," he said; "to be sure. And there are to be further orders; so something to occasion delay may turn up in the mean time. We shall make the most of the reprieve, and not think of what is coming."

Now entered Mr. Dacres from taking the fresh air—and smelling strongly of it. He was told the news. He was moody, as, somehow, he always was when coming in from the fresh air.

"Most unlucky," he said, dryly; "and you'll have to go, of course?"

"He *must*, papa," said Lucy, eagerly. "The colonel must be with his men!"

"No selling out, nor exchanging, of course?" said Mr. Dacres.

"It would be disgraceful, papa," said Lucy, answering for Vivian. Then, with assumed cheerfulness and alacrity, "After all, it will make little difference—a couple of years at the outside, if even eighteen months."

"Perhaps a year even, if it be a short business," said Vivian.

"And you will be back with us here! And by that time all these obstacles will have passed away."

Mr. Dacres was swinging on what he called "the hind legs" of his chair, with his eyes on the ceiling, "crooning," very low, a dismal ditty. He made no further remark. When Vivian rose to go away, and that rather mournful interview ended, Mr. Dacres rose too, and, with apparent cordiality, followed him out; then slipped an arm inside his, and drew him away with, "A word in your ear, Vivian, my boy." They went up the street together.

"You see this news alters matters entirely. After what has taken place between you and my Lulu, something must be settled as to time, place, and date. Once a man goes off to Gibraltar, the post takes rather too long coming to be depended on. So, as my dar-

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ling's next friend, I have to look to these things. See here. I find by our friend Gallinan, snug in my pocket" (this was his familiar style and title for the Englishman's friend, the excellent Galignani's Messenger), "the mail-ship sails on the twenty-fourth. That gives us, you see, little more than four weeks."

Vivian, downcast and distressed, answered:

"You are quite right. That is the very day. Too near, indeed."

"Very well. Now we come to what is to be done. What is the arrangement? Within that limit, my dear friend, I leave everything to you, and pray suit your own convenience."

There was a pause.

"Mr. Dacres," said the other, desperately, "you know how I feel towards your child. She knows it too; but, if I appear to hesitate in this matter, I implore you to give me credit for the most passionate eagerness to do what is right. You know not what my situation is, and I cannot tell you."

"I don't want to know," said Mr. Dacres, good humouredly. "All of us, here at least, are in queer situations enough. But, as I said, you'll have time enough to look about you between this and the sailing of the packet."

"I tell you, I am helpless," said Vivian, more desperately, "and have no choice. Things may become smooth, and I pray they may. But if they should not, I know *she* will understand."

"Oh now, see here," said Mr. Dacres, gravely, "*I* won't understand, though. You know, yourself, we can't have any of that. You're a gentleman, and I know all about you and your belongings; so I feel quite secure. To any of the raps here, of course, I'd take quite a different tone, but with *you* it's another matter. You see, yourself, there can't be anything of that sort. You and she have settled it long ago between you. That man, West, a fine, intelligent, honourable fellow, has got his congé — between ourselves, was rather cavalierly sent about his business — all for you. But girls are kittle cattle. I consider it as next to the rising of the glorious sun to-morrow, that we see you and she standing together, with Penny in his gown between ye. My dear friend, that must be, and no mistake, before you go. To this complexion we must come before the — what's this Gallinan says is her name? yes—the Duchess of Kent weighs anchor."

"I shall behave as a man of honour," said Vivian, "you may depend on that."

"Indeed, and I wish I was as sure of a hundred-pound note this moment."

At another time this artful allusion might have had some effect. But Vivian, looking gloomily, walked quickly away.

"By ——," said Mr. Dacres, savagely, as he looked after him, "if he's hatching any trick, I'll shoot him on the sands there. And all that they'll have for his Majesty's service, or to send home, will be his body."

A FLORENTINE PROCESSION.

UNDER this title, a picture by an Englishwoman—Mrs. Benham Hay—is now to be seen at the French Gallery in London, which deserves special notice from all persons interested in the progress of Art, and which, therefore, receives special notice here.

The scene is the Square of the Cathedral at Florence, and the period is the Carnival of the year 1497. It is the time when the pulpit eloquence of the famous Puritan of Italy (Savonarola), always fervent in denouncing the pomps and vanities of Florence, has singled out for special reprobation every object of luxury and beauty which can decorate a citizen's house or adorn a citizen's person. Incapable of appreciating the genial influences of jewellery in the formation of female character, or the loyal homage rendered to the general sense of beauty by the general use of rouge, the narrow old Reformer has insisted on the burning of all the "Vanities," with the ardour of a man who is only himself accessible to the most ineradicable vanity of all—the vanity of spiritual rule. A pious few have succumbed to the great preacher's arguments, out of church, as well as in. They have assembled in procession, with their "Vanities" in their hands. Under a striped awning, they pass through the old Cathedral Square of Florence, on their way to the fire which is to devour their doomed luxuries, in the presence of the profane many who are celebrating the joyous Carnival of mediæval times.

This is the moment chosen for illustration in the picture. It is a work of very considerable size, containing a large number of figures, exhibiting several striking dramatic contrasts, and exacting from the artist unusually severe intellectual preparation, and unusually elaborate technical execution. The aim of this picture is a high one, and (upon the whole) that aim has been intelligently and conscientiously achieved.

The defects of the work—to speak of these first, and to pay Mrs. Benham Hay the compliment of confronting her with impartial criticism—appear to lie in a certain meagreness of execution, and a certain want of easy force in drawing. It is also to be remarked that the work this picture has cost the artist—the struggle there has been here with the terrible technical difficulties of the most technically-exacting of all the Arts—is a little too visible in certain places. Take, for example, the timidly-stiff action and expression of the Carnival-reveller who holds the dice in his hand, at one end of the composition, and the curiously overwrought attitude of the citizen with the extended hands, at the other end. To these objections, which the artist may remove in future works, one more remains to be added, which the artist may remove immediately—for it lies, not in the picture itself, but

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in what is, most injudiciously, claimed for the picture in the catalogue.

Not content with the high imaginative effort of reviving the people and events of a past time; not content with representing character and action, feeling and beauty, Mrs. Benham Hay invites us to discover abstruse symbolical meanings in the principal figures of her picture. In plainer words, she aspires to express abstract qualities, by the purely concrete means of brushes and paint. To take an instance. We are charmed by one of her figures—a girl dressed in blue, playing on a musical instrument. What Art *can* do (within Art's limits) is shown in this figure. It is full of the charm of innocence and youth and beauty; there is true feeling in the face, and true grace in the attitude. These all-attractive qualities having produced their full effect upon us in the picture, we happen to look into the catalogue next, and find—what no human being, without the catalogue, could possibly discover—that our charming girl in blue represents "a servant of the Ideal" (whatever that may be), "absorbed in the meaning of the music she is playing." In other words, here is something which the picture, confessedly, cannot express for itself, and which the catalogue is obliged to express for it. The general spectator looks up again at the figure, sees no more in it than he saw before: arrives inevitably (prompted by the catalogue) at the false conclusion that there must be some defect in expression which he ought to have noticed before; and underrates the work which he would have appreciated at its proper value if the picture had been left to exercise its legitimate influence over him. The cultivated spectator takes a shorter way. He simply closes the catalogue; knowing perfectly well that it is claiming for the art of painting something which that art is, by the nature of it, absolutely incapable of accomplishing. In both cases, the picture suffers from being perversely weighted with a meaning which words alone can convey, and which no picture whatever can carry. Mrs. Benham Hay may rest assured that the worst obstacle her work will have to encounter on its way to success, is the cloudy symbolism which puffs out upon it from the catalogue.

Turning next to the merits of this remarkable picture, the first quality in it which strikes us, is the masterly vigour and variety of the composition. The difficulties here must have been enormous. The persons of the procession and the spectators of the procession are all arranged as nearly as possible on one plane. No common fancy, and no common knowledge of the resources of Art, were needed to make the action of the scene, thus treated, graceful and various, without the sacrifice of truth to Nature. Excepting the two figures already noticed of the reveller and the citizen, the difficulty here has been met, and vanquished, in a manner which deserves the heartiest recognition that we can bestow. Looking closer at the work, the eye is at once riveted by the admirable individuality of some of the heads—by the subtle knowledge of character, and the singularly clear and intelligent rendering of that knowledge to the eye. The heads of the two citizens (at the right-hand side of the picture) who stand nearest to the spectator; the head of the monk who is assisting to carry the picture; and the heads of some of the children (in which last, beauty and expression are admirably combined)—all prove this lady to be a genuine artist, in the best sense of the word. The colour again, so far as we could judge—looking at it under no very favourable atmospheric conditions—possesses the excellent qualities of vigour and harmony, and tells well at a distance, with no counterbalancing defect of harshness or glare on a nearer view.

Upon the whole, the claim of this picture on the public attention appears to us to be an unusually strong one. It is in many important respects a really rare work. One of the most exacting and elaborate efforts in Art that has been made by a woman in our time, it is also an effort in the imaginative direction; appearing at a period when painting in England is fast sinking into lower and lower materialism, and fast becoming more and more of a mere trade-commodity manufactured for a mere market-purpose. One of the objects of this journal, as our readers know, is to help the cause of fancy and imagination. The artist who has painted the Florentine Procession receives no special indulgence here—she has fairly earned the welcome which we offer to her in these pages.

THE SACK OF CORN SOLD AGAIN.

When the British banker established at Galatz, and the Irish gentleman about to commence business at the neighbouring port of Ibraïla, as described in our last number, are once fairly in the clutches of my prince upon his own estate, the rest is easy. By an adroit system of management, very well understood among Russian landlords, he is sure either to extract an advance from them upon the standing crops in hard cash, or to induce them to sign an agreement to purchase a stated quantity of wheat upon delivery. These agreements are always negotiable with a little trouble, for as one copy of every contract must be drawn in the Russian language, it is easy, by ambiguous expressions, to open the door to serious frauds. A sharp landlord, no more unscrupulous than many others of his order, may thus contrive, and often does contrive, to sell his wheat three or four times over. Of course this cannot be done in the same place, where all the local merchants are perfectly well acquainted with each other, and where the individual character of every landlord within a thousand versts is well known for all business purposes on the Exchange. The spring and summer occupation, therefore—which many of the Russian boyards have found extremely profitable—is to travel about on bamboozling expeditions. They

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are certain to receive from some friend, who expects to share in the result of the speculation, early and accurate knowledge of any new firms established within reach; and they generally contrive to swindle them before they have acquired sufficient experience to protect themselves. The complicated and ingenious intrigues by which these swindles are frequently made successful are, happily, quite unknown and inconceivable in the more healthy atmosphere of Western Europe. But the true-bred Russian magnate lives upon deceit as the breath of life, and may pass from the cradle to the grave without ever having spoken one plain truth, or accomplished one straightforward action, in the course of a long life. From the peculiar title-loving constitution of the British mind, Englishmen, and, strange to add, Scotchmen, who are very fond of trying to trade in Southern Russia, fall an easy prey to the cunning traps set for them; and an Irish firm of considerable capital and great respectability was utterly ruined in a few months by advances fraudulently extracted from them upon wheat never delivered, and of which they could never obtain any account whatever. Even when a boyard has actually sold the produce of his land many times over, he is not always satisfied. He has still another resource left, which he does not hesitate to adopt whenever possible. He contrives, by the influence of some personal friend or bribed official, to obtain a loan from one of the government land banks—banks which have been lately opened by imperial ukase for the purpose of affording relief to the small proprietors ruined by the emancipation of the serfs, and who have no money to hire agricultural labour except that advanced to them by the mercy of the State.

Now, there is a very true proverb in Russia, that "The Crown loses nothing"—which means that, under what circumstances soever money may be due to the imperial treasury, it must be paid, let who will go without their due. Accordingly, it frequently occurs that when the different persons who have made advances on the same crop, finding that faith is not kept with them, come to look after it, they discover that it has just been seized by government, and sold once more for a mere nominal price to some local pedlar, who has bribed the official man in possession. All remonstrance is worse than useless. If the complainant is at all troublesome or persistent, he is certain to get into some mischief or trouble, which has ostensibly nothing to do with his complaint, but which infallibly results from it, as a shadow follows substance. Indeed, as a rule in Russia, a dupe is always bullied by invariable routine. The noble and magnificent cheat who has got the money, is, of course, not to be found upon the spot, nor anywhere near it. When his financial operations for the year were complete in all their details, he would be sure to go his pleasant ways to Baden-Baden, to Kreutznach, to Paris, or to England. There he would be always received with every respect and distinction, spending his money very freely; and not unfrequently borrowing more from the families of governesses and awe-stricken people about him. No law can reach him, either in his own country or elsewhere, for these infamous breaches of contract, and they do not seem in the slightest degree to affect his social position even among respectable Russians who derive their incomes from legitimate sources. The common law of Russia is in a state of hopeless muddle, and its administration is utterly corrupt even when any definite principle is laid down by it. A creditor, if he can obtain a recognition of his debt, has no power whatever of enforcing it. If, after twenty years of litigation, an obstinate firm of foreigners obtain judgment upon a bill of exchange or a bond, the judgment has no practical effect whatever. If a debtor is too poor to leave the neighbourhood of his creditor, too friendless, insignificant, or utterly rascally to have a single friend in authority, instances have sometimes occurred when a judicial order has been extorted for his arrest. It is a mere sham when issued. The creditor will have to pay thirty kopecks, or about a shilling a day, for the support of his debtor while he is alleged to be incarcerated; but all the debtor will have to do on his part will be to share this money with his jailers, when he sends for it every morning, and no further inconvenience can arise from his fictitious imprisonment.

This is the manner, simply and truly told, in which the great corn markets of Southern Russia—which might have been a blessing to the world—have been entirely spoiled and ruined, so that no honest trade has hitherto been possible there. No merchant having any experience whatever of the country would go upon the Exchange of Odessa or Taganrog to buy or sell anything but bills of exchange. The corn markets are, in reality, attended merely by money-changers. Commercial business is transacted elsewhere. It is done in the far-away villages of the steppe by a special and peculiar class of travelling and resident pedlars, acting in concert with each other, and commissioned by the Greek houses to buy for them. All the queer history of every landlord in the country is known to these men. They are often a pleasant, amusing set of fellows, who find an eager welcome, especially from the half-savage women at the desolate "courts," or country-houses of the boyards. All the news from the outer world (of which he once formed part) that can reach many a dejected Boor of title, exiled by his rogueries to his neglected and dreary estate, comes to him through the gossip of these pedlars. They are his chief amusement; his guides, philosophers, and friends. But he abuses them awfully. His peculiar notion of merriment is to send for some pedlar, who is sure to be lurking about the premises and doing a stroke of business among the peasantry. The pedlar comes, all humility and homage. The boyard may once more fancy himself, if he pleases, among a

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society of British gentlemen who have just heard that he is a prince. The airs the creature gives himself to the pedlar are wonderful, and painful to witness. The interview opens with the outward rush of a torrent of boasting long pent-up by the frosts of domestic life under difficulties. The pedlar bows himself sideways, and bareheaded, at the close of every phrase; and when the boyard pauses to light a fresh cigarette, he murmurs a guttural chorus of praise, setting forth the virtues and greatness of his host. This flattery to ears long unused to it is always extremely welcome to the boyard, who soon warms to the entertainment, and lauds his own condescension in talking to the pedlar, to whom he relates many stately anecdotes of the time when he could borrow money. By-and-by he gets drunk, partly with adulation and partly with the fierce white brandy extracted, by a rude process, from corn. Then he falls to insulting the pedlar. He will lounge in uncouth attitudes with his henchmen and dependents, and shout with rude laughter as he vilifies his guest and pours taunt after taunt upon him. He does not often get to blows, but he does sometimes. When exhausted by these witticisms, he becomes maudlin, and declares, as drunken men will, that the pedlar is his best friend, and must get him a loan to go back to Paris. Then comes the sale of the wheat, if it is not mortgaged to government. The speculation is perfectly safe, as far as the pedlar and his employers are concerned, for if he makes an advance on the crop he will certainly remain in the neighbourhood till it is ripe, reaped, and carted. There is no deceiving him, for he is in the confidence and intimacy of every man, woman, and child about the place. Perhaps, under these circumstances, he may buy wheat at something under seven shillings a quarter, which leaves a large margin on an average price of forty-five shillings. But, although the pedlars can do this, nobody else could. No British commercial traveller has ever yet been found who could make head or tail of such an aggravating business; and for many years past he has ceased to try it. There is certainly no other partially civilised country in the world equally important to British interests, where there is not a single British merchant who can obtain a reasonable profit out of the produce exported to his own country. Many firms of every degree of respectability, men supported by unlimited capital, as well as sharp, keen-witted adventurers, have tried it; but every one of them has failed without exception; failed hopelessly, utterly, and been glad to escape, half-crazed by lawsuits, false swearing, and every torment which can afflict a mercantile man. Honourable persons, without a stain upon their character, have been advised by their best friends to fly the country in disguise by night, and smuggle themselves off to merchant ships that have weighed anchor, in order to get out of the clutches of the local harpies who have fastened upon them. Not an Englishman has left without being humbugged, worried, and plundered, so as never to desire to set foot in Russia any more. When he endeavours to collect his wits and recal the circumstances under which he has been robbed, the uppermost feeling in his mind is sheer amazement. He seems to himself to have passed through a startling dream. It is difficult for him to convince himself, and he will find it still harder to convince others, that every person he has had to deal with is a rogue, whose sole object, for the time being, has been to coax him, or to snub him, or to vex him, or to badger him, or to awe him, or to threaten him out of money, and that they have one and all succeeded in their several ways of doing so. There has been quite a spell upon the corn trade. Governors-general, mere local governors, princes, pedlars, small clerks, swarms of policemen, thievish notaries, have stuck to this simple business of fraudulently buying and selling like so many barnacles or locusts.

Thus, every merchant of repute being absolutely banished from the land, the whole of our vast corn trade with the south of Russia and the Moldo-Wallachian Principalities is mere gambling. It does not signify a straw what may be the price of wheat in Podolia, Volhynia, and Kherson. A great deal of it is worth so little that it is left to rot upon the ground unreaped, much of it is spoiled by the autumn rains, much of it is idly wasted. We do not get it any cheaper for that. The price of wheat on the shores of the Euxine and the Azoff, as well as in the quasi-Polish provinces, is entirely regulated by the quotations of Mark-lane, Marseilles, and Genoa. The corn to be purchased in Eastern Europe is entirely in the hands of gamblers, and this is the sole secret that has kept up the price of it. Twenty times the quantity actually exported is grown and lost. Twenty times more might be grown and saved; and doubtless many landlords live in a state of humiliating poverty who have all the materials of wealth about them. Nothing is wanted but a little thrift and honesty to set all this to rights; and the opening of the new railways must bring about a great change. Facilities for swindling of every kind have existed so long in Russia only because of the difficulty of travelling. In a few years, even such a brilliant impostor as Dooyoumalsky will have no chance of making the profits which now accrue to him. He will be obliged, like all other foes to civilised men, to retire to deserts where the engineer and navvy are still unknown; and even Siberia itself is about to be closed to him. He will have cause to rejoice at this himself in due season, for, enormous as are the trade returns of his business, they never make him really rich. Although a corn crop may be sold, long before it is ripe, to different persons, not one of them pays the full price for it. Probably all of them together do not pay one half of its real value if honestly reaped and sold in the right way. None of the dupes will part with their money without a

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prospect of such advantage as reduces the sum actually wheedled out of them to a fractional amount of the quotations in open market. All the tricks and intrigues ever tried in this world have defeated themselves in the end, according to one of those immutable laws by which mankind is governed, and from which there is no departure, either in Russia or elsewhere. When the money is collected; when bills of exchange at long dates have been cashed or exchanged for other bills of doubtful worth, discounted in places where the current interest on such transactions is usually fifty per cent, and never below thirty; when the carefully prepared agreements, with all their disputable clauses, have been hawked about among those who see their way to further extortion, still they are not very saleable nor pleasant things to touch, especially where there is a smart consul. But suppose the total amount of the swindle to be at last scraped together? it does not all go into one pouch. First, a horde of travelling pedlars must have their commission upon every dirty detail of it. Then the local police, in many places, have to be made safe; the provincial judges must be bribed; and sometimes the tribunals at Moscow and the Senate itself must be corrupted, in cases where the issue is resolutely disputed by angry folk. Then come the principal partners in the concern, for it cannot be managed single-handed. In the case of my prince, he had to divide his scanty booty, firstly, with his friend upon the frontier who furnished information in the first instance; secondly, with the talkative broker at Galatz; and, thirdly, with other brokers at Ibraïla, besides his own private dependents and hangers-on.

Moreover, a Russian prince, although travelling with shaggy ponies belonging to the peasants on his own estate, cannot hurry about from place to place for nothing. So if my prince had counted his spoil carefully at the end of the campaign, he would have perceived that it was but small. The seed corn which the princess got from her old admirer, and which disappeared in the private trade of her chief butler, might have been sold for twice as much as my prince pocketed for the whole harvest which grew out of it.

There is no sounder moral upon Russian things than this. Every one who has business in the country finds it quite impossible to arrive at any satisfactory result, owing to the endless ramifications of minds as acute as they are disloyal. However the affair ends, he will find himself lighter in purse and heavier at heart than he ought to be. But what comes of it all on the other side? Nothing—absolutely nothing. Accomplished scamps, who have passed their whole lives in fibbing and stealing, seldom retain more money than credit at the end of their career. The folk they have to deal with soon find them out, and act accordingly. Now and then they get hold of a new and unsuspecting customer, but they soon scare him; and he, generally, makes such a cry about being fleeced so closely, that other sheep scamper away with their wool altogether. There are few objects more pitiable than these jaded scamps, tired out and exhausted at last by their interminable deceptions. Such a fine fellow as my prince, with his great court friends and belongings, may go on for a time, but even he sinks out of his depth at last. An illness will do it; and these kind of men appear peculiarly subject to the fearful visitation of complete paralysis of the limbs. Philosopher-physicians may account for this or not, but it is certainly a noteworthy fact.

They may usually be found at last hunted down by their own hounds at Gastein or Carlsbad, where they mostly resort from the first days of spring till late in the autumn. Inquiry will, perhaps, reveal that they are then supported in morose discontent, worse than death, partly by the slender means saved by a neglected wife when the crash came, partly by begging-letters, which they can still dictate.

So, if travellers thitherward next autumn should remark a wasted man with pale cheeks, made blue by mineral waters, and eyes singularly bright and keen, sitting motionless but watchful in an invalid chair; and if that man should be attended by a fat, faded lady, very sad and tearful, very patient and kind, it is by no means impossible that the stricken wretch may be our old acquaintance Aide-de-camp General his Highness the Prince Dooyoumalsky, rebuked and chastened by a mysterious and awful justice which has overtaken him at last.

THE KILLING OF DR. PARKMAN.

I.

In the remembrance of the Americans themselves, Cambridge, near Boston, is associated with the renown of their greatest men. They still gather under the elm-tree in the Common beneath which Washington first drew his sword when taking command of the American army in 1775; and close by is the fine old mansion which he occupied as head-quarters during the eventful years that followed. In the same house now dwells Longfellow—the most charming poet of his country—who thus alludes to its former illustrious occupant:

> Once, ah! once, within these walls
> The father of his country dwelt;
> And yonder meadows, broad and damp,
> The fires of the besieging camp
> Encircled with a burning belt.
> Up and down, these echoing stairs
> Sounded his majestic tread:
> Yes; within this very room
> Sat he, in those hours of gloom—
> Weary both in heart and head.

At Cambridge, too, lives Lowell the poet, and Dana the author, and Emerson the profound and eloquent thinker, and Agassiz the naturalist, and Asa Gray, and Pierce, and Wynam, and others whose names are familiar to the learned of every nation. Amongst its dead are em-

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balmed the memories of Everett the statesman, of Channing the divine, of Sparkes the historian, and of Felton the genial Hellenic scholar. Society composed of spirits like these breathes a higher and more inspiriting atmosphere than that of the surrounding states, and proportionably to its more sensitive organisation was the shudder which pervaded it on the disclosure of the terrible occurrence I am about to relate, which took place at the close of the year 1849.

The chair of chemistry and mineralogy in Harvard College was at that time filled by Dr. John W. Webster, who had for more than twenty-five years held the same position. Besides his class of general students, he held the additional appointment of lecturer on chemistry in the Medical School of the University, which, for more convenient access to the great hospitals, has its halls at Boston, close to the Charles River, and washed by the rising and falling tide in the bay. Dr. Webster was a Master of Arts and a member of the chief societies of science both in America and Europe. He was a gentleman of affable and agreeable manners, eager in the pursuit of his favourite studies, and remarkable for his faculty of collecting and imparting knowledge in regard to them. He was connected by birth and marriage with some of the best families in Boston; he associated with the higher circles, and his wife and daughters were, universally, favourites. The love of his children and his home was one of his distinguishing characteristics, and seemed to transcend every other feeling. Still, like many men of generous impulses, he was incautious in his expenditure, and careless in the control of his domestic and financial affairs. Hence he became embarrassed, and was obliged to obtain temporary relief by loans from his friends. Amongst others who so accommodated him was Dr. George Parkman, a member of an affluent and influential family at Boston, who devoted his time to the management of considerable estates in land and houses, situated in the quarter of the city immediately adjoining the Medical College. To the erection of the latter he had been a liberal contributor, and it was chiefly to his instrumentality that his friend Dr. Webster had been indebted for his election to the chemical chair.

Dr. Parkman was somewhat peculiar, if not eccentric, in his person and habits. He was a tall gaunt man, of about sixty years of age, with bony limbs, strongly marked features, and his under-jaw protuberant and disproportionally large. He was esteemed a just and honourable man. In his business transactions he was precise and punctual to an unusual degree; but so far from being a rigorous creditor, he not only lent with liberality, but showed the utmost forbearance towards his debtors provided their conduct was truthful and sincere. His immediate relatives were persons of position and consequence; and his brother, Dr. Samuel Parkman, was minister of the church of which Dr. Webster was a parishioner. In his own house, Dr. Parkman was remarkable for methodical and unvarying punctuality—so much so, that in the course of very many years he was never known to be late for the dinner-hour, which was half-past two o'clock; and his land-agent, who had occasion to be with him daily, said that during fourteen years, calling at least fifty times a year, he never failed in a single instance to find him at home.

At an early hour on Friday morning, November 23, 1849, a gentleman, whose name the servant did not catch, called at Dr. Parkman's house, No. 8, Walnut-street, Boston, and had a hasty interview with him, the result of which was an appointment to meet him the same afternoon at half-past one o'clock. He did not tell his family who the person was, or where the interview was to take place. After breakfast, he left home, cheerful as usual, and proceeded to his ordinary business and his customary visits to his tenants. He had an invalid daughter, to whom he was tenderly attached; and, as it drew near dinner-time, he purchased for her some fresh lettuces, a rare delicacy at that season of the year. These he left in a shop close to the Medical College, where he made some other purchases, saying he would return for them in a few minutes on his way home. This was about a quarter to two o'clock in the forenoon, but he returned no more—nor was he ever again seen alive.

The surprise and uneasiness of his household increased to alarm as evening fell and night set in; but when morning came with no tidings of him, his friends and relatives placed themselves in active communication with the civil authorities and the police. Great excitement prevailed in Cambridge and Boston; the walls were placarded with notices and rewards; the river and harbour were dragged; and the yards and cellars of the houses near which he was last seen were diligently examined. But the labours of the Saturday served in no degree to dispel the mystery of the day before. Up to Sunday, the only information received was the negative result of fruitless inquiries made throughout an area extending for upwards of fifty miles on every side of Boston. Apprehension and dread at length deepened into conviction that Dr. Parkman was murdered, and his body made away with.

II.

During the progress of this vigilant pursuit, the police were more than once perplexed by assurances of voluntary witnesses that the missing gentleman had been seen in remote parts of the city; and anonymous letters were received by the authorities evidently meant to divert their attention to places at a distance, and thus to draw them away from the real scene of the tragedy. At length, on the afternoon of Sunday the first reliable intelligence was received, but it did not bring down the chain of events to a much later moment than that at which Dr. Parkman had last been seen living. This information was brought by Professor Webster to

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the Reverend Dr. Parkman, the brother of the deceased. "On Sunday," said the reverend gentleman at a later period, "after my brother's disappearance, we were in great perplexity and distress. None of us went to church. I passed the morning with my poor brother's family; and after my return home, about four o'clock in the afternoon, Dr. Webster came to my house. On entering the parlour, almost without the customary salutations, he said, 'I come to tell you that I saw your brother at half-past one o'clock on Friday, and paid him some money.' 'Then you are the person,' said I, 'who called at my brother's house on Friday morning, and made the appointment to meet him in the afternoon?' He replied that he was, and that he would have come to us sooner, but that he had not seen the notice of my brother's disappearance until the evening before. I then said what a relief it was to us all to know who it was that came on Friday morning, as we feared that some one who meant him ill had called and beguiled him away. Dr. Webster said that he was the person. Dr. Parkman, he added, came to the Medical College at half-past one, when he paid him four hundred and eighty dollars. My brother, he told me, went out rapidly from the room where they met; whether he took the road to Cambridge Dr. Webster could not tell, but he intended to go there himself and ascertain."

Although this voluntary disclosure had the natural effect of concentrating attention on Professor Webster—who was thus shown to have been the last person in whose company the missing gentleman was known to have been—suspicion did not for a moment attach to one so eminent and so intimate with the deceased. As a matter of course, search was made for the body at the Medical College; but, although this was thoroughly and narrowly carried on in all the other parts of the building, the gentlemen by whom it was conducted apologised with a smile to Dr. Webster for such a mere formality as an examination of *his* rooms. Dr. Webster, on his part, was frank and communicative with all who spoke on the subject; but it was remarked as extraordinary, by some who conversed with him, that his manner in alluding to Professor Parkman was cold and even testy, and that he offered no expressions of sympathy with the family under so awful and mysterious a bereavement. The story which Dr. Webster told varied in some minor details as he repeated it to different persons; but substantially it was to the effect that Dr. Parkman came to the Medical College by appointment on Friday to receive payment of a sum lent by him to Dr. Webster, secured by a mortgage of his mineralogical and other collections; that, on receiving the balance due to him, Dr. Parkman was about to retire without cancelling the deed, or leaving any evidence of its discharge; that, on Dr. Webster reminding him of this, he turned back, dashed his pen across the signature, and said in the course of the week he would have a formal release registered at Cambridge; and that he then went away, ascending the stairs by two steps at a time, and Dr. Webster saw him no more.

The fact being thus made public that there had been pecuniary relations between them, a more minute investigation of Dr. Parkman's accounts disclosed a state of the affair, which, as regarded Dr. Webster, was not altogether satisfactory. It appeared that, for some years, Dr. Webster's financial circumstances had been painfully complicated, that he had been repeatedly relieved by loans of money from Dr. Parkman at no exorbitant rates. In the payment of these, Dr. Webster had all along manifested his habitual want of punctuality; but his irregularities were treated leniently by Dr. Parkman, so long as he believed them to be occasioned by absolute inability to pay. Thus, a debt of four hundred dollars, contracted in 1842, remained unpaid five years after, when Dr. Parkman made him a further advance of two thousand dollars, on the security of personal property, including his cabinet of minerals. So far, however, from emerging out of his difficulties, Dr. Webster, in 1849, while still indebted for a considerable balance of this loan, applied to Mr. Shaw, a brother-in-law of Dr. Parkman, to raise a further sum, to save, as he said, his furniture from seizure, and, with this view, he sold to him the very minerals which were still under mortgage to his other creditor. Justly incensed at this breach of faith, Dr. Parkman, on learning the deception that had been practised on him, avowed his determination to compel Dr. Webster to discharge his debts to him. From this period he pursued him as a man would who felt his confidence had been misplaced and his trust violated, and who regarded his debtor as a dishonourable man. This resolution he caused to be communicated to Dr. Webster; but even then he consented to further delay, under a promise that the professor would wipe off the debt, on a certain day, out of the proceeds of the tickets about to be issued to his class for lectures at the Medical College. Here a fresh breach of faith occurred. Dr. Webster received the money for his lectures, but, instead of paying Dr. Parkman, he used it to appease other and more importunate creditors. Indignant at this fresh and flagrant breach of faith and honour, Dr. Parkman appears to have importuned Dr. Webster with determined perseverance; he threatened to commence law proceedings, to seize his furniture, and to deprive him of his professorship. He called at the Medical College, and, to be certain of finding the professor, seated himself in his class-room, and when the class was dispersing asked for his money. He dunned him in the streets; he rode over to Cambridge, and repeated his demands there. At length, on Monday, 19th of November, Parkman left Dr. Webster at the college, in high indignation at his repeated subterfuges. On Tuesday, Dr. Webster made fresh overtures for pacification; and on Thursday, the day before his final disappearance, Dr. Parkman rode over to Cambridge, and had an interview with him at his own residence.

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On Friday morning, as Dr. Webster admitted, he went to Dr. Parkman's house, and asked him to call on him at half-past one the same day at the college. That engagement he kept punctually, and there all discernible trace of him ended.

A further disclosure was, however, made, which showed that one material portion of Dr. Webster's story was untrue. A gentleman familiar with the accounts of both, and aware of the only possible funds out of which Dr. Webster had the means of paying, discovered that, after Dr. Parkman's disappearance, Dr. Webster had applied that money to a totally different purpose, and, consequently, that his debt had not been discharged as he represented. Suspicion thus engendered as to one point became painfully excited by further scrutiny into others. Dr. Webster's professional duties, it will be remembered, lay partly at Harvard College, in Cambridge, and partly at the Medical School at Boston. At the latter his lectures were delivered on four days in each week—Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday—ending at one o'clock on each occasion. In inviting Dr. Parkman to call on him on Friday *at half-past one,* he named an hour at which all the classes would be closed and the students dispersed; besides which, the interval from one o'clock on Friday till his pupils would reassemble on the Tuesday following was the longest that could occur in any week without risk of intrusion from visitors or persons on business. It was the professor's habit to return to Cambridge immediately after the delivery of his lecture at Boston; but it was noticed that on Friday, the 23rd, he remained in his laboratory till late in the winter evening; that he returned to his rooms again on Saturday, when there was no class to address, a thing he was not known to do before, and not only so, but that he came there on Sunday. Nor was this all; in the week which followed there fell a festival of the church, during which no lectures were delivered after Tuesday. Yet on every day of that week—from Monday till Friday—Dr. Webster was daily at the college, and closeted, with locked doors, in his laboratory till unusually late hours. Still more remarkable, he had directed the servants to light none of the stoves in his rooms on those days; and yet on each of them he had fires laid and lighted by himself, and these were of more than ordinary heat and intensity, especially one in the assay furnace. The key of one door, which led to a sink attached to the laboratory, and which usually hung upon a particular nail, was every day carried home by Dr. Webster. It was also remembered that on Saturday, which at the college was the ordinary day for a general cleaning and dusting, the servants presented themselves as usual to perform their work, but they could not get admittance to Dr. Webster's rooms, and that he spoke through the closed door, and ordered them away.

Meantime, during these few dreadful days of anxiety and alarm, Dr. Webster, though later in returning home, spent his evenings as usual in Cambridge, took his daughters to parties, played whist with his friends, mingled in the customary hospitalities of the place, sympathised with the general consternation of the society, and compared his own conjectures with those of others as to the fate of that friend who had so suddenly and so mysteriously disappeared from amongst them.

III.

But there was one individual who, during this period of terror and perplexity, kept his eye with more than ordinary steadiness upon Dr. Webster, and from the first strongly suspected him to be the murderer of Dr. Parkman. This was Ephraim Littlefield, the janitor of the Medical College, who had charge of the building, and who, with his wife and servants, occupied apartments in the basement. Littlefield was stirred by the reproach flung upon the institution that the missing man had been seen to enter its door, and was never known to leave it again. Every time he appeared in the streets he was disquieted by innuendoes of the people, that if the body were found anywhere, it would be found there. He narrowly watched the movements of Dr. Webster; and, familiar as he was with all the economy and arrangements of the institution and its professors, he could not be otherwise than surprised by his exceptional acts, and by his mysterious closetings with bolted doors at unaccustomed hours. Littlefield was dissatisfied with the imperfect and superficial examination which the authorities had on two occasions made in Dr. Webster's apartments. He recalled that, although the Cambridge carrier had always theretofore taken parcels for the lecturer into the laboratory, orders were given at this particular time that he should deposit them outside the door. He had been present by accident at one of the incriminatory interviews between Dr. Webster and Dr. Parkman, when the latter taxed him with fraud, and threatened him "unless something was settled to-morrow." He remembered that about the same time Dr. Webster made curious inquiries of him as to how access could be had to the vault beneath the anatomy school, into which were thrown the human remains from the dissecting-tables. He asked if a light would burn in that vault so as to exhibit its contents, but the janitor told him no, for he had recently hung a negro's head there to macerate, but the cord rotted and the skull fell, and when he tried to raise it the foul air extinguished the lamp.

Littlefield called to mind that on Thursday, the day before the Friday, Dr. Webster had asked him to procure him from the hospital a jar full of human blood, on which he meant, he said, to experiment in the course of to-morrow's lecture; but, as no patients were that day bled, the janitor was unable to procure it. It occurred to the porter, had blood been discovered in the laboratory during the search, how easy it would have been to assert that it was the same blood that had been brought there from

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the hospital. He remembered on the fatal Friday to have seen a sledge-hammer in a particular spot in Dr. Webster's room, to which it had been moved from its accustomed place in another apartment; that sledge-hammer had never since been seen, although it had been sought for.

He remembered that on Friday, the 23rd, after the business of the classes was over, when it was his duty to arrange the laboratory table and extinguish the fires, he tried with his pass-key the several doors, by any one of which he had access daily to Dr. Webster's rooms, but found the whole of them not only locked, but barred and bolted on the inside, and he could get no reply to his knock, although he heard Dr. Webster moving inside, and listened to the noise of the water-pipes, which were flowing with unusual continuance. Again, it was the custom when the professor left for the day, to leave the doors unfastened, so as to give ready access to the servants. Dr. Webster, at this particular time, when he went to his own house at Cambridge, made all the doors fast—a precaution which had never before been taken.

Dr. Webster had two laboratories; one on the same floor as his lecture-room, and the other on the floor below it. A staircase connected the two. Littlefield remembered that on the day following the visit of Dr. Parkman, when he had lighted the stove in the upper room, and was moving to retire through the lower one, the professor stopped him abruptly, and directed him to pass out by a different door. All that Saturday, as well as the succeeding days, Dr. Webster, while at the college, remained locked in-doors; and the janitor recollected how each morning on arriving the doctor asked for the news, and whether any tidings had been heard of Dr. Parkman; and he could not fail to observe that whereas at former times when he spoke he "held his head up, and looked him in the face, he held down his head now, seemed agitated and confused, and he thought he looked pale."

Thus the floors of the laboratory had not been cleaned by any of the servants for a week; yet when Littlefield saw them by chance, the tiles were still wet, as if from a recent washing. On Tuesday he was admitted to the private room, and, after attending to the fire in it, he asked whether he should light the one in the laboratory below; but Dr. Webster said no, as the things he was about to lecture on did not require heat; yet some hours later, on passing the room, the fire in that furnace was burning so fiercely, that the janitor was unable to lay his hand upon the outside wall.

On a conference on all these matters between the janitor and his wife, they came to the conclusion that Dr. Webster must be in some manner involved in the disappearance of Dr. Parkman, and forthwith the janitor communicated his suspicions, and the grounds for them, to some of the authorities of the Medical College, and addressed himself to watch with greater stealth the further proceedings of the professor. He listened at his doors, climbed up to look in at his windows, and though he detected nothing specific, he was able to mark the extraordinary consumption of fuel, the exhausting of the water in every receptacle, and the dripping condition of the walls of the staircase descending to the laboratory. Thus baffled in all accessible quarters, Littlefield bethought him of the only spot in the large building which had hitherto remained unsearched. This was the vault below the sink in Dr. Webster's room; but as the doctor had of late carried the key in his own pocket, there was no means of seeing into it except by breaking a hole through the outer wall, in a part of the basement so difficult of access that it could only be reached by crawling along the earth between the spandril walls that supported the floor of the main building. This repulsive task Littlefield at last undertook. He crept under the floors till he reached the wall, and worked incessantly, on Monday and Tuesday, with a crowbar and a cold chisel. His wife meantime kept watch, and a signal was to be given to warn him of the approach of Dr. Webster to the room above. At length, by dint of singular exertion, he cut through the five courses of brick of which the strong wall consisted; he opened a hole large enough to admit his arm with a lantern, and afterwards his head; and there, resting on the dark earth, and spattered by the drip from the water-pipe above, lay the mangled loins and pelvis of a human body. One of the thighs had been flung down along with it, the flesh had been partially stripped from the bones, and the muscles and white cartilages were glittering in the sudden light.

IV.

It was about sunset on a November evening when Littlefield made his appalling discovery. Forthwith he made it known to some of the professors, and to the relatives of Dr. Parkman. Accompanied by the officers of police, they repaired to the Medical College, to confirm the fearful report of the janitor. They descended through the trap-door and crawled along the ground till they reached the vault, whence they drew forth its fearful contents; whereupon the City Marshal despatched officers to Cambridge to arrest Professor Webster.

The professor had gone home to his family somewhat earlier that afternoon; another dreadful day was over; public suspense, unrelieved by any discovery, was now likely to subside, whilst every hour the chances of detection were becoming less and less, by the decomposition and gradual destruction of the proofs. A gentleman had been calling on Dr. Webster, and was taking leave of him at the gate, when the chief of police presented himself, having stopped the carriage with his company a short distance off. Anxious to conceal from Dr. Webster as long

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as possible that the purpose of their errand was to capture him, they told him no more than that the search was that night to be renewed at the college, and that he was wanted to be present. He went up the steps for his hat, and readily accompanied them to the coach. He talked freely by the way on the general news of the day, as well as the all-absorbing topic of Dr. Parkman, and it was only when he reached the city jail, between eight and nine o'clock, that he was informed that he had been brought there a prisoner, charged with murder.

The effect on him was fearful; his first thought was for his children. He entreated that word might be sent home to his family, and he complained piteously that he had been torn away from them without the power to say farewell. "Oh, my children!" he exclaimed, in agony. "What will they do? What will they think of me? He submitted helplessly to the usual search of his person, and in his pocket-book were found his two promissory notes to Dr. Parkman, with signatures not cancelled, but rudely defaced, as if smeared by a brush. The officer in whose custody he was, said that, at this stage, he thought he saw Dr. Webster take his hand from his pocket and put it to his mouth, and in a moment he had a spasm, as if in a fit. His mental sufferings were pitiable. He flung himself on a pallet in the lock-up, buried his face deep in the cushion, and lay in utter prostration. When called on to rise, he declared himself unable, without assistance. He was lifted to a chair, but his head hung down, his eyes flowed with hysterical tears, and perspiration poured from every pore, although the wind blew and the night was cold. He asked for water, but, when handed to him, he choked and could not drink, let the glass fall from his hand, and spilled the contents over his dress. When somewhat more composed, he re-entered the coach, and, about ten o'clock at night, accompanied the public officer to his rooms in the Medical College. He was taken to the laboratory, the mangled limbs were brought up from the vault below, and placed upon a board a few feet from him. He looked at them and shuddered, but made no remark, and was carried back to the prison.

The following morning the examination of the apartments proceeded, and fresh discoveries were made of dreadful import. An old tea-chest, so packed as to appear to contain mineralogical specimens only, was upset and examined, when it proved to be filled with tan, in which was concealed the trunk of a man without head or arms. A sharp hunting-knife, stained with blood, fell out from among the tan, and a perforation which such a knife would make was seen upon the left breast, severing the ribs and penetrating to the region of the heart. The public carrier remembered that, two days after the murder of Dr. Parkman, he, by order of Dr. Webster, had brought that empty tea-chest, together with a sack full of tan, from his private residence at Cambridge to the lecture-room in the Medical College. A butcher's saw for dividing bones was found in the same place, and there were traces of fire upon the pieces, as if an unsuccessful attempt had been made to burn the limbs before they had been thrown into the vault or concealed in the box of tan. A pair of overalls, or loose pantaloons, were taken from a press in the same room, which were stained with blood; and the spots presented this suggestive peculiarity: that instead of being of an oval or elongated shape, as they would have been had the drops fallen downward from a table, they were circular, as would be the case if blood were spouting upwards from a body lying on the ground.

The ashes of the assay furnace were mixed with fragments of calcined bones, and amongst them were minute particles of gold and a mother-of-pearl shirt-button. Portions of the skull showed that the head had been cloven before it was committed to the fire. Of all the fragments found no one was a duplicate of any other, and those portions still missing showed that the head, the arms, hands, and feet had been destroyed, as well as the right leg from the knee downwards.

In proportion and dimensions these mangled limbs were all in conformity with the height and size of Dr. Parkman. But an extraordinary occurrence supplied the most irrefragible proof of their identity. The form of his jaw, it has already been stated, was peculiar; it projected so much, that amongst his familiars he was known by the sobriquet of "Chin." His teeth were decayed, and he wore a false set, consisting of a mineral block mounted in gold. Amongst the cinders and scoriæ of the stove a block of mineral teeth was found resting on the bottom of the grate, and these an experienced dentist at once recognised as the identical set which he had made for Dr. Parkman three years before, and had repaired only a fortnight since. From the singular formation of the jaw, the fitting of these teeth required more than ordinary care. An unusual number of casts, moulds, and trial-plates had to be prepared; all of these the artist was enabled to produce; and with startling distinctness he demonstrated their identity with the fragments now discovered. The calcined portions had pieces of bone still adhering to them—a proof that the artificial teeth had been attached to the head when both were flung together into the furnace.

A singular implement found in the laboratory was a grapnel, made out of a number of large fish-hooks, tied on to a long wooden handle; and the twine by which they were made fast proved to be a portion of the same marlin cord with which the thigh was compressed into the hollow of the ribs. A ball of this twine was found in the doctor's room.

The conduct of Dr. Webster, from the moment of his committal, showed an absolute hopelessness of escape. The janitor was evi-

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dently the individual whom he had most reason to dread, and on being told that Littlefield was the person who discovered the bones in the vault, he smote his thigh, and in a low voice murmured, "Then I am a ruined man!"

Overwhelmed with this conviction, when arraigned before the magistrates on the Monday following his arrest, he declined to submit himself for examination, or to offer any explanation whatsoever of the appalling incidents by which he was imperilled He never ventured even to ask for a copy of the charges on which he was consigned to prison. It is not possible now to say whether this reticence was the result of despair, or whether he regarded silence as the safest course, at a crisis when his only possible chance might lay in the hesitation on the part of a jury to convict on evidence which was still exclusively circumstantial. His demeanour continued calm during the long interval between committal in November and the opening of his trial in the following March. On that solemn occasion he pleaded "Not guilty" to the charge of murdering Dr. Parkman. His outward fortitude never for a moment deserted him during the twelve days over which the trial was protracted; and link by link the formidable chain of evidence coiled itself round him. Even when the fatal sentence of death was pronounced, he still protested his innocence, and declared himself the victim of secret conspiracy and public delusion.

V.

The interval between sentence and execution was long, owing to the hearing of a writ of error on a matter of form, as well as deliberations on petitions for a new trial, all of which were ineffectual. At length, early in July, the Governor of Massachusetts presided in a State Committee on Pardons to consider a petition from Dr. Webster, which contained his confession of the murder, coupled with an entreaty that his punishment might be commuted from death to imprisonment, on the grounds that the provocation he received from Dr. Parkman had so exasperated him that he slew him in a paroxysm of fury. This crime must, therefore, he argued, be regarded not as deliberate murder, but as homicide in the mitigated form of manslaughter. This appeal, like the previous one, was unsuccessful. The Committee of Pardons, in their report, failed to recognise in the convict's statement an impress of truth such as could weaken the recorded proof of premeditation, and the sentence was eventually carried into execution.

Coupling this most extraordinary confession with the evidence previously given, it was apparent that in the midst of the interview to which he had invited Dr. Parkman, Dr. Webster had suddenly felled him by a blow which crushed in the skull. The alleged provocation given him by Dr. Parkman was, to a great extent, untrue. The unhappy prisoner found it essential to dwell upon this in order to sustain his palliative assertion of anger and sudden rage; but the preparations he had made, and the appliances he had in readiness to get rid of the dead body, were altogether inconsistent with the theory of surprise, and only reconcilable with deliberate and careful premeditation.

Having deprived his victim of life, he said that he raised the dead body from the floor of the upper laboratory, where it was stretched, and dragged it into the private room adjoining, in which there was a sink, and there he stripped it of every article of clothing, including the hat and boots; and these he consumed in the stove, along with the contents of the pockets, excepting a watch, which he flung into the river in the evening as he made his way home to Cambridge. The next movement was to lift the body into the sink, and this Dr. Webster explained that he effected by sitting the corpse partially erect in the corner, and, climbing up into the sink himself, he succeeded in dragging it up. There he quickly dismembered it by means of the sharp hunting-knife found in the tan, and the blood as it flowed he washed down by a continuous stream from the water-pipe. The head and other parts he carried to the lower laboratory, and there burned them in the stove; the hands and feet he disposed of in the same manner the following day. The trunk thus disfigured he divided into halves, each of which he placed in the leaden cisterns under the laboratory tables, covering them thoroughly with a strong solution of alkali, in the hope that it would macerate, and so dissolve the flesh. In this he was disappointed; and he was forced to withdraw the bones and dispose of them as they were eventually found in the box and in the vault, from the latter of which places he could readily draw up the limbs with the fish-hooks and grapnel as he found facilities for burning them. In moving these heavy pieces of human flesh across the pavement and down the stairs, blood was necessarily spattered on the walls; and the marks of this he removed by washing the place with diluted nitrate of copper—a preparation which he knew to be an active solvent of blood.

But the destruction of a human body by fire proved to be a greatly more tedious process than the professor had at first imagined, more especially as he had to work with a number of small stoves and fireplaces instead of one capacious furnace. An amateur anatomist, who gave evidence on the trial, illustrated this difficulty by stating that he had much experience in "burning up and getting rid of human remains" after dissection; and, from the peculiar smell, it was extremely difficult to effect it without attracting attention. He had once, he said, received as a present from the United States Marshal the dead body of a pirate, whose bones only he was desirous to preserve, and being obliged to get rid quickly of the flesh, as the weather was warm, he found that it required nearly two days to consume the soft parts alone with pine-chips and other highly combustible fuel. He

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had to account to the police for the offensive effluvium it occasioned in the neighbourhood.

Professor Webster, although he had several fires alight, had other and greater difficulties to contend with; he had only a limited time which he could give on each day to his disgusting task. His appearance at the college at unusual hours would attract notice, and on the dark evenings of November the light from the fires would betray the fact that he had the furnaces burning in his room, after he had forbidden the janitor to have any fires kindled there. Hence, day after day he had to renew the hideous labour, to go from stove to stove feeding his "strange fires" with such portions of their dreadful fuel as he thought they could consume, still chafing at the tardy process of combustion; and night after night he had to suspend the sickening task, conceal the unburned limbs in their respective hiding-places, and betake himself to his own home, there to meet the anxious inquiries of his family, and the welcome of his innocent daughters.

The mental effort is beyond ordinary comprehension which must have been summoned up to carry a man through such an ordeal; to nerve him for the cheerful assemblies of his friends in the evening; to enable him to discuss with composure the one terrific subject which engrossed the thoughts of every circle of society; to answer the inquiries of anxious friends in the public streets; and to deliver his accustomed lecture to his class, separated only by a partition from the room which was the scene of his recent crime, and within which, only distant a few feet, was hidden the unburied corpse of his victim. Through these revolting scenes the professor was forced to sustain himself, till all was suspended by the fatal discovery of the mutilated body in the vault.

With this ample confession of his guilt, coupled with the story of Dr. Parkman's provocation, Dr. Webster threw himself on the merciful consideration of the state authorities. But the result was disappointment; the governor and his colleagues came reluctantly to the conclusion that there was nothing in the prisoner's statement to form a basis for intervention, and that the safety of the community, the inviolability of the law, and the principles of impartial justice, demanded the execution of the sentence.

This decision was pronounced on the 17th of July, 1850, and on the 30th of August following the high sheriff of Boston endorsed on the back of the death-warrant, previously directed to him by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, "That on that day, between the hours of nine and ten o'clock in the forenoon, within the enclosed yard of the prison, and in the presence of the public officers and twelve other citizens summoned to be witnesses of the fact, John W. Webster, convicted of the murder of Dr. Parkman, was hanged by the neck until he was dead. And that on its being duly certified that life was extinct, he had caused the dead body to be enclosed in a coffin, and given up to his relatives, in accordance with the request of the convict made two days before."

YOU DID!

I.

As children, when we used to play
  Upon the beach in muslin frocks,
And form'd a tangled disarray
  Of soaking shoes and tatter'd socks;
When nurse was driven to complain,
  And kind mamma so gently chid,
Begging you ne'er to err again,
  You said you wouldn't—but you did.

II.

When Betty, whom you work'd so hard,
  And yet who loved you none the less,
Was pray'd, so urgently, to guard
  A secret from your governess;
You recollect her puzzled look,
  Wishing to do as she was bid,
And voice of badly feigned rebuke,
  Which vow'd she wouldn't—but she did.

III.

And when, one afternoon, from town
  ("Forbidden fruit" supposed to be)
A new three-volume batch came down
  From Mr. Mudie's library;
You promised that, howe'er assail'd,
  You would not even raise the lid,
But curiosity prevail'd
  Against obedience—and you did.

IV.

That garden party! far the best
  Of any I have e'er enjoy'd:
We sat together, while the rest
  (Rare chance!) were otherwise employ'd;
Though your mamma had talk'd for hours,
  And ventur'd firmly to forbid
A tête-à-tête among the flowers;
  You said you wouldn't—but you did.

V.

The things that happen'd 'neath the shade
  Of clematis that cluster'd fair,
The things we look'd, and thought, and said,
  And hoped, are neither here nor there.
I know not if the day was fine,
  Or 'neath the clouds the sun was hid;
I know to one request of mine
  You said you wouldn't—and you did.

A COUNTRY WORKHOUSE.

ANOTHER phase of misdoing here. We have crossed England again, and are on the railway which is part of the high road to India and the East. Still on the track of shameful, flagrant abuses; still fighting the drearily, uphill fight against highly sanctioned cruelties and legally committed wrong. Passing down Southampton-wards, the reader may remark a formal, gloomy building standing off the railway to the left. It has small narrow windows and high walls. Its shape is of the well-known windmill pattern, with the four wings for

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wards and the centre for the master's house. A younger brother of the Millbank Penitentiary, who has settled down to agricultural pursuits, with a surly regret for the turnkeys and warders, the handcuffs and punishment cells of the metropolitan head of the family, is what this building suggests most strongly as we pass it in the train. To ask at the station, a few miles further, what it is; to shorten our journey and sacrifice the remainder of our fare on learning it is a workhouse; to be seated in a frouzy fly and to be rolling past vast manufactories, the mere look of which should act as a powerful tonic, so full are they of iron; and to be in a large garden where a couple of labourers are at work, and where one of the latter, touching his hat, follows us into the house—all this is part of the set purpose with which our investigations commenced. Our route for the day had been to another workhouse in a different county; but seeing this one, with its barrack-prison-penitentiary air, we decided to inspect it, without at the time knowing its name, or neighbourhood, or guardian board. Its physiognomy was enough, and its internal character was fully in accordance with what we had seen written on its face.

The red-faced gardener—who is a healthy, stalwart, loud-voiced, brisk-mannered fellow, who looks as if he could fell an ox, and who, on a nearer inspection, might be the foreman or overlooker of a factory in which manual labour is severe—turns out to be the master. A boisterous hearty man of five-and-forty, confident and strong, nothing will give him greater pleasure than to show us over the house. "He's a worker he is, and has been all his days; and he's been in the service of the Poor Law Board, man and boy, the best part of his life. A young-looking man, you think? Ah, but he was porter a many years before he was master, that's where it is, you see, and now he is looking forward to being 'superannuasiated,' if his employers will be so good. Always given satisfaction, and never had no complaints either from his guardians or from the Poor Law Board; always at it, you see, always busy—can't bear being idle; and there's always something to do about a house this size. Much help from the inmates? Well, he naturally gets what he can, but it's poor work with the class he's got to deal with. All got something the matter with 'em—old, or ill, or infirm, or imbecile—so that the plain truth is, it ain't possible to get a good day's work out of one of 'em." "Are there none of them able-bodied?" we ask. "It would be a positive treat to see an able-bodied man in this workhouse," the master assures us, with strong feeling, "for then there might be a chance of having one's directions regularly and properly carried out. As it is, he hopes we'll excuse it, if there's anything out of order. He tries his best to keep things straight, and he's always at it himself. His gentlemen, too, the guardians that is, are always ready to back him up, always wanting to do everything for the poor creatures, and to make 'em happy." If appearances did not belie this master more than is those faithful tell-tales' wont, he was a kind-hearted, well-meaning servant, anxious to do his duty, and with a wholesome reverence for "his gentlemen," and his pastors, masters, and superiors generally. He would have made an admirable boatswain, or drill-sergeant; an able member of the fire-brigade, a good gang-master or sub-contractor. His lungs, his gait, his bustling busy air, his love of order and discipline, his overflowing health, his abundant physical energy, marked him out for these or cognate employments. He was one of those vigorous creatures who seem like a tornado in a sick-room, and who, with the best and kindest intentions, would speak to a sinking invalid in a stentorian whisper, calculated to take the roof off St. Paul's, or, stronger testimony still, to be heard distinctly in St. Stephen's. That is when the sinking invalid is not a pauper. What the tone is in the latter case we shall have the means of judging presently; for though "our gentlemen" have hired a paid nurse from Netley, she confines her attention to the female infirmary ward, and holds it to be no part of her duty to attend upon sick or dying men. Need the master tell us he would prefer to have her help, though for that matter all the sick are well looked after, we may take his word.

The female infirmary contains four patients, and has a foot-warmer, a bed-pan, a plentiful supply of water, a sufficiency of towels, and fairly appointed beds. One of the water-beds is in London, being mended, but the other is in use; and from the poor girl who sits reading at the fire to the poor invalid who is pouting her life away in bed, these infirmary inmates seem decently housed and cared for. It is true the nurse's complaint that the windows could not be opened without, in wet weather, letting the rain pour in, nor in cold weather without giving all the inmates cold, might be avoided by the simple process of making them movable at the top; while her statement as to the foul smell arising from the closet close by, was a sufficiently grave reflection upon the management; but this infirmary, with its light cheerful aspect, its bright fire, and trained nursing, was so superior to what we saw subsequently, that we are anxious to look on the bright side, and to give full credit for the pains taken to supply the more obvious and pressing wants. We hint that with but four sick people to look after, the nurse must lead a somewhat leisurely life; and, feeling considerably puzzled as to the extent of the staff under our rigorous friend, the master, if the remainder of the house is looked after on the same liberal scale, we pass to the male infirmary.

Our puzzle is at an end. The female infirmary, which was built some years since as a fever hospital, is away from the main building, and its arrangements are as exceptional as its architecture. There, the windows admitted

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light as well as rain, and could be looked out of by the people inside. Here, they are ingeniously arranged to admit the minimum of light, and to make looking out impossible. The other arrangements are to match. The sick men die unnursed, or with such nursing as a shambling invalid pauper thinks proper to supply. This man cannot read, and, though one in whom our friend the master "has great confidence, or he wouldn't be allowed to be here," is as painfully unfit for duty as ignornt, shiftless incompetence can make him.

Take this room, with its melancholy semicircle of white-smocked aged figures, crouching round the fire. They sit, each in his chair, motionless and silent, and blinking at the hot coals as if to learn from them the mystery of their drudging, cheerless lives. "Old age, gentlemen, old age and infirmities are what they're suffering from; and they've been good labourers in their day." They are all under medical treatment, as the row of bottles on the shelf opposite the fire testifies; and their beaten, worn look, their bovine, placid endurance of evil, as they moved their poor mouths helplessly to and fro, gave to the scriptural quotation in illuminated characters over the doorway, "Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him," a rather bitter significance. Illuminated writing, garish lettering, mock mediæval scroll-work—all told their own story of gratified taste, and seemed terribly out of place here. "Given by one of the ladies who visits the house," explained the master, in his hearty quarter-deck manner; and the contrast between the drawing-room look of the text and the demeanour of the poor wretches it was meant to guide, was not the less striking for this fact. These old men were clean, and were mercifully permitted to wait by the fire in-doors, and not huddled into potato-shed or yard, as in the workhouse described last week. But they were so obviously waiting for death, so removed in their utter indifference or ignorance from all sense of our presence, so oblivious of everything but the fire, that for sheer pity's sake we spoke to none of them. There they sat, each with the same distinctiveness of feature as a close observer may discover in a flock of sheep, to which in their uniform smocks they bore a strong generic resemblance. There is something awe-inspiring in humanity from which the spirit seems to be already winging its flight; and to rouse any of these poor creatures from their torpid trance with questions as to diet or treatment, was felt to be impossible. A semicircle of clay figures whose breathing arrangements continued somehow after life had fled, but who, for all rational purposes of existence, for comprehension of their own identity, or the identity of those formerly dearest to them; for feeling aught higher than a confused consciousness that the fire gave comfort and warmth; for hope, or love, or regrets; for any of the complex feelings which go to make up sentient humanity, seemed as dead as the oldest mummy or the earliest pre-Adamite.

We ask in low tones of the master as to their several ailments. "Mostly old age, of course," that ostentatiously able-bodied person replies, adding, with increased cheerfulness, "but here are their bottles, if you'd like to examine them, gentlemen." These are embrocations, to swallow which would be certain death; harmless mixtures, to be taken by spoonfuls every few hours; liniments and potions; drugs to act powerfully in one way upon the human system, and drugs having equal power in a precisely opposite direction—all labelled and ranged upon the shelf. We ask whose duty it is to see that these helpless people take the drugs prescribed for them, and are told the wardsman. This is the shambling broken-down fellow in dirty fustian, who fumbles at his greasy cap, and bows and smiles, and is blandly confident. "Oh yes, gentlemen, I'm very particular, very particular indeed, that they have their medicines at the right time. I allers gives it out to them myself, gentlemen—allers, and I'm never late with it, no, never. Here the medicine is, and there the inmates are, and they all has every drop the doctor sends—every drop." Here, as elsewhere, there is an eagerness to repudiate all desire to appropriate the medicines prescribed for others, as if not to drink off nauseous medicines surreptitiously were in itself a highly meritorious act of self-denial. The master supports the wardsman with unabated heartiness. "A respectable man, this; he wouldn't say anything but what's true, or do anything but what's right, and you surely take what he says, gentlemen—you may take what he says." At this time the canvas bundle nearest the fire gives a feeble bleat, as if for help; but on looking round we find the old pauper composing it to be still, moving his mouth to and fro like the rest, and to be blinking stolidly as ever at the fire. So our conversation is resumed, not without a nervous dread that "something may happen," as the phrase goes; that the last remnant of some life may slip away before we leave. "What is this medicine, and how often is it used?" asked my medical companion, holding up a bottle containing some five ounces of diluted sugar of lead. "*Well, sir, I can't read, so I can't say what it is; but they all know their own bottles, sir, and that prevents mistake?*" This is the guarantee formed by ratepayers, guardians, and the Poor Law Board! This the fitness of the "respectable man" for the most delicate and responsible of duties! It was impossible to suppress all tokens of the horror we felt; and the master, who became healthier and more vigorous every moment, added breezily, "But I'm generally about myself, you know, gentlemen—generally about; for I'm always at it, and nothing takes place without my knowing." The group, nodding, blinking, dozing, and silently chewing the cud at the fire, seemed so incapable of choice or thought; their chrysalis state was so utterly opposed to the exercise of any reasoning faculty—even to the comprehension of where they were, or what their life had been—that to suppose them capable of

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choice of medicine, or of doing aught than swallow mechanically whatever was put before them, seemed little short of madness. Useless, defenceless, impotent, and with nothing their own but the power of choice between them and the death which the drugs at their elbow would provide, the sacred injunction, "Rest in the Lord," and wait for death, in its ornamental lettering and semi-ecclesiastical dress, seemed little better than a mockery.

A few paces and we are in another ward, with a man dying of cancer in one corner, and two other patients in beds opposite him. It would be improper to detail in these columns the worst of the evils rampant here. It is sufficient to say these patients were untended, save by the shambling pauper who could not read, and that the evidence of neglect was more palpable than among the clean old people in the adjoining room. One of the men was up, and partly dressed; another gazed at us with fierce eyes from his bed; while the third, and cancerous one, neither spoke nor moved, but groaned heavily, as if in his acute pain. "They say I'm well, and I'm to go," said the man in the bed furthest from the door—a man with hollow cheeks and hungry eyes, which followed us irritably wherever we went—"but I'm fit for nought, and I can't stand for weakness. Complaints? I don't know what yer means by complaints. Complaining won't give me work, or make me fit for working, I reckon. Complaints? Come to lie where I do, with a man like that in the corner, sleeping in the same room with yer, and ye'll perhaps know what complaining means. Have I enough to eat? Am I well taken care of? Do I enjoy my food? Yes, yes, well enough—well enough. It isn't for the like of me to make a fuss. Lie here—lie here, that's all I ask yer, and yer won't want a book or a compass to teach yer how to be unhappy. What's the use of talking? Here I am, and here I've been, and here I've got to quit next Tuesday, thank God; though I know no more what's to become of me than a child unborn. Bin in this parish all my life, and my father before me; know my duty, and know it ain't for me to find particular fault. Lie here on yer back for three weeks—lie here on yer back, and then ye'll know more than yer'll get by poking about with a pencil and a little book, and asking questions about winders." A coarse man, in a high state of nervous irritability, this pauper resented the presence of strangers, and fidgeted dreadfully under the master's eye. The invalid in the chair could not stand up, and upon those two devolved all care of the dying man, save when the "respectable man," who could not read, came in. In other words, each man lived or died without nursing or attendance. The paid nurse from Netley Hospital had her three or four women patients to look after in the other building, and spent her time in comparative idleness, while the men passed away in hospital lingeringly, if no accidents occurred, speedily when the knowledge of "their own bottles" failed them, and the shambling pauper's incompetence fulfilled itself. The windows of these sick wards, as well as those all over the house, were so contrived as to admit the light without enabling those inside to look out—an ingenious contrivance for increasing the dismalness and misery of pauper sickness meriting special notice. We hint that the room would be more cheerful if the windows came within reach of the eye, and are at once snuffed out by the master's superior knowledge and beaming health. "Couldn't look out of window; bless you, sir, if the windows was made ever so low those men couldn't, sir," with a convincing smile. "I don't see the use of altering it myself. The old men had rather look into the fire, and these are confined to their beds or chairs, so no windows would be of much value, would they? Besides, if you once began altering you might go through the house, for all the windows are alike, as was the fashion for workhouses when this was built—about thirty years old, gentlemen, more or less; and there's very few windows you can see out of. It was considered a beauty in those days, and I'm not sure it would be wise to alter even now. There's no object in paupers looking out of window, that I can see. Light and cheerfulness? Oh! I assure you there's light enough for work, and my people ain't up to much work, either." "But for those who are past work," we plead. "You say, yourself, it would be 'a treat to see an able-bodied pauper' in your workhouse; would it not be proper, then, to give the old and worn-out such comfort as they might derive from changing their abode from a prison to an asylum?" Our master's rubicund face is puzzled as if with an insoluble problem, and his head shakes to and fro meditatively, as if suffering from too much beef on the brain. But the uniform kindness and consideration of the guardians consoles him, and he says, with the air of a man delivering a knock-down argument, "Our gentlemen haven't thought so, however, or I'm certain it would have been done."

Does it need any consideration, we ask, whether darkness should be preferred to light? But we address the wind, for the master has discovered a spot upon the white wall, and is busy removing it with his pocket-handkerchief as tenderly as if the coarse size and whitewash were a child. I could fancy a clean hard-working labourer, who conformed to rules, obeyed the master, and kept down the work, having better times under our friend than he would be likely to know outside the workhouse walls. Labour, hard coarse labour, and keeping the place clean, are his passions. His notion of "a treat" is to catch some able-bodied paupers instead of the imbecile and helplessly infirm, who persist in drifting through the gates, and to turn them to active scrubbing and cleansing uses. His great plaint is that he can't keep the work under, and the house and its discipline

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represent duty to his narrow conscientious mind. The paupers are mere accessories, pawns on the chess-board, of quite subordinate interest to the prime function of keeping the house in order. A better or more industrious housekeeper, or a less sympathetic spirit for the weak and ailing, it would be hard to find. Not that there was a trace of intentional unkindness in his speech or manner. "Old man washing the floor is terrible deaf, and ain't much use, but he does his best. Young man at the fire ain't exactly off his head, but has fits dreadful bad, and hasn't been able to do a good day's work since he's bin in here. Men in the shed outside pumping, look better than the rest? Lord bless you, gentlemen," despondently, "there ain't one on 'em sound, if you come to examine 'em—not one on 'em you could count on for good work." So in the kitchens, sculleries, and outhouses. So in the other offices of this gloomy penal place. The women, with the exception of a few who were nursing young infants, imbecile, infirm, and given to fits. The men invalided or past work. The house has been studiously made to resemble a prison, and the gloomy vaults, in which cooking and dish-cleaning are carried on, would show with disadvantage against the catacombs of Kensal-green. Unlike our friends in Staffordshire, no pretence is made of nursing the sick and dying men, or of keeping the paid nurse within call. The functionary last named—who, if we may make bold to say so, might have been selected for the angularity of figure and sharp iciness of speech, which gave her a general shrewish resemblance to Miss Miggs—appeared to be queen of the situation. The faults she pointed out in windows and approaches, and, above all, in the arrangements of her private apartments, were launched at the master with an "I-told-you-so" air, as personal grievances he ought to have redressed; while with an absurdly exaggerated estimate of our powers, her preliminary answer to every question was an attitude suggesting fatalistic submission, as if to tell us, with suppressed spitefulness, that she was ready, there and then, to look on while the master was being bowstrung or bastinadoed under our dread decree. Superfluous in her denunciation and repudiation of all that was faulty in her department, it was easy to see that while our energetic friend the master is overworked, the nurse has nothing to do. To look after four women patients, none of whom require close watching or attendance, and to be carefully placed in a building away from the workhouse, so that "calling up" or rendering extra assistance is impossible, while men are dying unnursed in a pest-house over the way, seems such a ridiculous perversion of common sense as well as common humanity, that we ask, weakly enough, whether the Poor Law inspector has not remarked upon it. "Very satisfactory," is that official's verdict, and "has been for years," the master proudly adds: so we can but conclude that poisoning off male paupers is the parochial set-off against having sick women nursed.

BOX NUMBER TWENTY.

To begin in the style of the older stories found in the Ramblers, and Connoisseurs, and Spectators, and such improving works: "Born to affluence, Cynthia was courted by the smiles and flatteries of many admirers." When I say Cynthia, a sort of figure is used to hide the name of the charming Isabelle Mantower; when I say affluence, I mean twenty thousand pounds in her own right, "with power of appointment, sir," as the family solicitor remarked; and when I say numerous admirers, I should rather narrow the number down to one single worshipper, who, after a long probation, many trials, and countless little assiduities, was at last told he might no longer "languish in despair," once more to use the old Rambler and Spectator language just alluded to. "None but the brave deserve the fair," was the encouraging remark of another old writer. I was the brave, preferred, let me add, before a marching captain and an Irish clergyman, with the most transparently mercenary views. Many an interview I had. Many a card of mine lay on the hall-table, and the name on those cards was

MR. EDGAR BAKER.

My Isabelle had no charms to speak of. "Nice" is the handsomest word which I can conscientiously indulge in. Her features were a little irregular, her face long; but then it was all in her own right; she "could do what she liked," "make ducks and drakes of it," as I overheard the low-minded captain say to a confederate. She wanted colour; she was rather thin and tall (the mercenary clergyman used the *ungentlemanly* word "scraggy" in the moment of his disappointment). But I knew, from information I could depend on, that it was rising every day, and was every sixpence of it in snug bank-stock, which, if realised, would, to use the captain's phrase, "bring down the dibs, sir." The worst was, there was a drawback. (The governor and company were most liberal, and deducted only the usual thing.) Let me again quote the captain: "She was so devilish suspicious;" and the mercenary clergyman: "She was as touchy as a cat, sir." Both gentlemen said, separately, on a later occasion, "If I had not my own time with her!"

It was on Saturday night, and we had fixed, Mrs. Mantower the mother, Isabelle, and her Edgar, to go to the theatre, and "make a party." I had taken the places—"Box Number Twenty," as my voucher told me. It would be unhandsome to dwell on the larger meaning that might be given to the expression "taken the places;" I will simply say, I had taken the places. I will more simply say still, or I will still more simply say, that in any plans for popular amusement I always took the places, as it

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was called, in that large sense. There was a great attraction for that night—a new play. It was called "THE IRON WAY!" and was one of those wonderful realisations of every-day existence, which are so tangible and so minute, taken as an exact picture of the daily life about us, that for the moment we are *not* within the walls of the theatre, but are actually pursuing our ordinary round. I had heard marvels of the "bits of realism" in this vivid work, and as Dumbleton was to play John Bowers, the radical but virtuous engine-driver, I made it a point that Mrs. Mantower, Isabelle, and her Edgar should go together. I was really excited about the matter.

On the Saturday night, I arrived not so comfortable altogether as I might have been, had I ordered dinner, say, half an hour before. As it was, I passed from a hurried chop to a more hurried dress-coat and et cæteras; and from this again to a yet more hurried Hansom. Who was responsible for this improper haste? Part, I will confess, may be laid to the account of my own fears, for *I should not have liked* to have kept my Isabelle waiting. And this "not have liked" may be accepted in a large and even handsome sense; and, besides, I was busy looking for a little trinket to clasp about the swelling neck (large sense) of my Isabelle. Such little homage neglected often led to her expressing *her disappointment in a very marked way*. (Large sense as before.) I think I had shown taste and à-propos-ness, or appropriateness rather. For it was a section of that great cable which has been so recently laid, and which has bound the hearts of two great nations to throb together in concert and be cemented in a bond of union. The section of the cable was very neatly mounted, though the cable part rather suggested the heel of a lady's boot, where the nails are in a semi-circle.

As I went along in the Hansom, I thought of a neat turn with which I might present the section of my cable. It might lure her thoughts in the direction of the shares. "Let this," I decided to say, "be an emblem of the line that is laid from *your* heart to mine. Let this tiny ornament be a symbol, &c." I had the idea—that was enough. I could easily supply myself with a happily turned phrase.

It was a little late. I ran up-stairs, and rushed in with alacrity. They were both in the room.

"Here," said I, "is a little section of the cable which I have brought you. Let this tiny ornament ——" Before I could get any further, I saw that something was wrong. Instinctively I withdrew my section, and looked from one to the other.

"For shame of yourself!" said Mrs. Mantower. "I am astonished at you!"

"Don't speak to him, mamma," said the lovely Isabelle. "What does he care?"

"About what?" I asked, simply.

"Just listen to him," said Isabelle, now sobbing; "any one in his position to ask *that*."

"What nonsense," I said, a little incautiously. "This is some of the old story."

"Old story!" she repeated, hysterically. "Ah! that's it. Take him away, mamma. Let him go to his creature."

"Go to my creature!" I repeated, amazed. "This is folly. Why, look here! Look at what I have been occupying the whole day to get for you! A section of the cable, which I *had* hoped would make two nations—or hearts, I should say—throb."

As I approached her with the little trinket, she gave a scream and sank down on the sofa. I was bewildered. Her mother, a good woman, beckoned me softly out of the room. At the bottom of the stairs, she said,

"Why did you do it? I know you meant nothing, but she saw you with a girl—a woman—a female—a lady, to-day at a shop door."

I recollected it all. I *had* met my little cousin Kitty, and was glad to see her. A pretty little creature, with whom, I ween, very few could be compared.

"Will it be credited," said I, indignantly, "the business I was on with little Kitty? Look at this," pulling out the trinket, "a section of the cable which was to adorn her neck." (And I motioned upwards.)

She was a worthy woman, and I suppose took me to mean that little Kitty had helped me to choose the section of the cable.

"Good creature!" she said. "Well, I tell you, leave it to me." (She absently took up the cable.) "You go on to the theatre, or anywhere you like. Come back in a couple of hours, and all will be right."

The overture must have been playing at that moment. I accepted with alacrity, and hurried away.

"Between ourselves," I said aloud in the cab, "I shall enjoy THE IRON WAY twice as much. I mean," I added nervously, as though some one might have overheard me, "I shall have more room in the Box." Morally speaking, what could make up for the loss of her, who, with all her failings, had the largest share of my heart. "Shares," I repeated, musingly, making it plural; "perhaps the largest of any one."

There was an enormous crowd at the theatre. How lucky I had taken places (in the large sense). The play had begun. As I entered, there was a storm of applause, for one of the grand "set scenes" had just opened—a factory interior; four floors seen all at once. There were real power-looms all at work, real yarns, real spindles, real steam, real factory boys and girls, overseers, and the real din and whirl, accompanied by fluttering music in the orchestra; and above, in front, were the machines that travelled forwards and backwards with the usual jerk and stoppage. The girls picked up the broken threads. I never heard such applause as arose at this wonderful bit of realism, and it shows to what perfection the stage is coming. In time it may lead to a curious inversion, and we may have to look for real practical life on the boards of the stage, while theatricals will be confined to our own

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false and tinsel-like round of existence. A bell rang for dinner, the mill stopped in a second, the machine ceased to travel, the hands—I suppose at least three hundred supernumeraries—poured out down the real stairs (here there were real fire-cocks), and Rose, the virtuous engine-driver's daughter, was left behind. *She* is not in a hurry to get to dinner: she has properly no regular home to go to; for her father's home is on his tender. But the overseer is kind to her, delicate, considerate, and, at this moment, is speaking to her. This was really getting interesting; and if I have any experience in human countenances, I should say *that* overseer—yes there was something gentle and seducing in his manner. Rose, orphan, be on your guard! He is saying he could get her made nursery governess *in his mother's family;* and I declare she wavers. No; she will consider.

I drew back to breathe a little freely, when I heard a rustle and a voice behind me, saying, in a sort of suppressed whisper, "Will they never come?"

I was really confounded; for close behind me, with her chair almost touching mine, I saw a pair of the darkest, largest, deepest, most piercing black eyes, set in two deep shaded caverns. A lady confronted me—of Spanish extraction, I should say—for she was all in black silk and black lace, which, of course, are conclusive. Were those wonderful eyes fixed with a deep intense stare upon me? No, they paid me no such compliment; their glance flew past me, as an express does by some contemptible little signal-station. I was a little nettled—of course, at the intrusion.

"I beg your pardon," I said, "but I *think* there must be some mistake."

She started. "Mistake!" she said. "There *could* be none. It is impossible. My information could not deceive me. They were to be here."

And the eyes never turned from the fixed point opposite. I was still more nettled.

"I don't know whether they were to be here or not," I said, "but I merely state that this is a private box, paid for—I mean, taken by me, and——"

"Number Twenty?" she asked.

"The very number," I said.

"Exactly opposite Number Forty—quite right," she said. "All has fallen out exactly as I directed. Oh!" she added, impatiently, "will they *never* come? Am I to be foiled again?"

"This is my box, madam," I repeated, louder.

"Ah! you fatigue me. Go—leave me. Do you want more? There then!" And she held out money.

This outrage was too much. Her eyes were still, turned to the fixed point, and she did not care I suppose, to distinguish me from the person who had shown her to my box. Yes, *my* box. That moved me.

"I should be sorry," I said, rising, "to——"

On a sudden she caught my arm. "There—there, at last! Now I can trust my eyes. Sit down—don't stir—not a motion—not a sound." And she caught my arm with a grip and clutch that made me wince. "You are witness," she said, passionately, "you who are belonging to this place. Mind, I shall call on you. Take care you are in your office. Look at the pair. Look at them well, so that you shall know them again. *There* he is—with his hooked nose, and his perfidious smile; and she, the weak, insipid, sickly, colourless creature! Don't you wonder at his taste?"

I was really growing curious, and did at last look across; and certainly, in the box exactly opposite, which had been empty up to that moment, were sitting a lady and gentleman, whom she had very happily and photographically hit off. A very hooked nose, and a smile that really amounted to a leer. And a very fair blonde, a young woman, with quite the insipid expression she had described.

"You see them," she said—"the pair?"

"I do, and I must say I do wonder at his taste, whoever he be—that is, if his taste lie in being where he is instead of being where I am."

"Exactly," she said, eagerly, and with a kindly sort of manner. "Ah, you know human nature——"

"A little," I was beginning, modestly.

"You see all the types—old and young, the gay, the dissipated, and the virtuous—all come to *you* on the one errand. Sir, I am that man's wife—his injured, abused, deserted wife! He has left me——"

"For the colourless creature?"

"Yes, for *her*. Can you conceive such a depraved, corrupted taste? He thinks I am in Paris, but I am not."

I gave a motion of assent, for I could not dispute *that*.

"No, I am not," she repeated. "I have tracked him. I have overtaken him—run him down; and you little thought, when you brought him there and brought me here, what you were doing. Never mind—all in good time. Ah, I see I can count on *you*. After you have discharged your duties here, I would speak with you. You will see me to my home. I have no friend in this great city. I am French—a French orphan girl, portionless; *she* has wealth. He thinks he can get rid of me and wed *her;* but he won't."

This was growing interesting. I felt a deep sympathy for this fine creature, treated so cruelly. Just as my eyes wandered across to the pair opposite (all this time she kept herself well concealed behind the curtain) I gave a start, for in the next box, each with an opera-glass turned towards Number Twenty, I recognised two figures that I knew. I declare, the marching captain and his confederate, the mercenary Irish clergyman, the latter clumsily disguised by muffling—a white coat and the like! He didn't take *me* in. They had found me out, and were chuckling together.

I knew what their miserable game would

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be, so not a moment was to be lost. I rose softly, put back my chair as softly; but she had my arm again, gripped in a moment (she had great strength for a woman). "Sit down," she said.

"I am really sorry," I said.

"Sit down," she repeated, in a low and more decided tone, "or it will be worse for you. I can see what you would do; but if you stir again, BY THE LIVING SAPERLOTTE——"

What she meant by this awful and most profane oath, I cannot now tell. I suppose it answers to our LIVING JINGO, which is forcible enough in its way. But, strange to say, it had completely the effect of intimidating me. I sat stupified.

A scratching at the door and a little clatter. The box-keeper—the *real* one. "*This* is the box-keeper," I said, softly, wishing to set her right gently as to her little mistake.

"What does it matter?" she said, contemptuously. "If there were dozens of ye, I would not stir! If you speak to him so much as a word——"

He spoke to me, though, and put a letter into my hand.

"Box Number Twenty?" he said.

"Quite right," I said.

From Mrs. Mantower. It ran:

"DEAR EDGAR. All is well again. The little cable did wonders. Darling Isabelle always listens to reason, and, I *think*, admits she was hasty. Look out for a little surprise. Mum. "HENRIETTA MANTOWER."

Here was a situation! What was to become of me?

"Look at them again," she said, "whispering—exchanging vows, soft nothings. Oh, if I could only——"

What *was* I to do? An idea struck me. "You might go over and surprise them," I said. "It would fall on the guilty pair like a thunderbolt. They would wish the earth to open and cover them, and——"

"The earth?" she interrupted, quickly. "Where?"

"I mean the flooring," I said. "It is the only course. Lose not a moment—not a second; you will be only just in time."

She looked at me scornfully. "Folly, folly. What can *you* know of my troubles—a creature like you, that lives in a paltry world of tickets and clothes-presses like this?" she added, looking up. "No, I shall wait it all out; never take my eyes from them; and then at the end you shall see——"

Things were growing desperate. Even if I burst from her with violence, at the risk of disturbing the theatre by a scuffle, it would not mend the matter. *They* would arrive all the same, be shown to Box Twenty—for there was no other vacant—hear from the *real* box-keeper that I had been there and had gone away, "and had left the lady behind." What *was* to be done? An idea struck me—surely a Heaven-sent inspiration. She was full of passion and fervour, and had generous feelings. I would tell her my little story hurriedly.

"Look here," I said (an invitation she took no notice of). "Look here. I throw myself on your consideration, and I am sure you will take pity on me. Mine is a very peculiar position, and you are in part accountable. A lady to whom I am engaged to be married will arrive here in a moment—nay, may now be in the lobby. She is jealous and excitable, and I need not say," I added, with a gallant bow, "that the presence of a lady of such surpassing charms as I now see before me would justify her in the worst suspicions. She is wealthy; I am poor. The whole will be at an end if she comes. Be generous, then, and leave me while there is time."

She turned to me for the first time and smiled.

"There is some comfort always left to us, and I can at least inflict on others the torture that others have inflicted on *me*. I am glad to hear this. My peace and happiness shall not be the only peace and happiness to be wrecked in this world. I am glad you have told me. I love to be cruel and vindictive. Ah, look—look! They have seen me at last!" And she threw back the curtains and boldly exposed to view all her splendid charms.

She flashed out upon the house a miracle of beauty and defiance. I could see that they *did* see her—the hooked-nose man and his param—I mean the lady with him. More opera-glasses were directed at us from all sides, including the opera-glass of the captain and the Irish clergyman (they had only one between them, and they used it alternately).

"What does the world think *now*?" she said, triumphantly—"what does the house think? Would it compare his pale-faced leman——"

"Beg pardon," I said.

"—His leman," she repeated, "with *me*? But I will wring his heart yet, for he is as jealous as any tiger. Though he can indulge *him*self, his pride does not *stomach* my doing so. See, he is troubled already. I'll wring him yet. A good idea. Sit forward—well forward."

"I don't quite understand——"

"Sit forward," she said, hoarsely, "and do you as you are bid. If you stir an inch, BY THE LIVING SAP——"

Scared at her desperate manner, I did as I was bid, and sat well forward. She threw on me, I assure you, one of the most rapturous and—may I be forgiven the expression, but really it is the only one adequate?—voluptuously Eastern smiles that could be conceived.

Her face was bent over to me with a languishing look that really fascinated me. What could she mean? Her voice—it was rather hoarse—was whispering to me:

"Smile at me. Speak to me as if tenderly—as though you were worshipping me."

"But, really——"

"Make as though you were going to sink

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down at my feet and adore. Look *passionately* at me, fool, or by the living Sap——"

I declare, either her intimidating manner, or something entrancing in those wonderful eyes, led me on, and for the moment I fell in with her odd humour. I did assume those amorous glances she had instructed me to give; and, to carry out the delusion better, I even took her hand, and poured out some half-rapturous fragments. She answered me much in the same key. I could see the hook-nosed man was really disturbed at the proceedings; and, from a strange feeling of curiosity to see how far the thing *could* go, I carried on some pantomime, bending over her hand as though I was about to imprint a——

"O my Alfredo!" she said, her hair "fanning" me.

"O Sultana!" I said, "see me at your feet."

There was a rustle and a half-cry behind me. I had forgotten *them*. They were come, the two women, and were standing over us—the injured, outraged girl, on whose neck was actually glittering the section of the little cable—I mean the little section of the cable. O infatuation!

The situation was desperate. I lost all speech and presence of mind. I could make no excuse. I stammered out some frantic explanation.

"It was all *her* fault. She was acting a part just to excite the jealousy of that hook-nosed man opposite. I am innocent, indeed I am. It looks bad, I know. She intimidated me, but it was mere acting—it was, indeed."

"Softly," said the Franco-Spanish lady. "He is touched at last. All goes well." Then she turned round. "Ah," she said, smiling, "so your bêtes noires have come at last. I told you they would. I know women better than you. You can hide nothing from us, though you plot ever so cleverly. I told you they would find you out. See, see, he is going. I knew the spell would work. I shall confront him in the lobby, and then, what a scene!"

All this while the two women had not spoken a word.

"It is time for us to leave this place," said Mrs. Mantower. "It is not a fit spot for us."

"It was all a mistake, I assure you," I said, frantically. "I am as innocent as a child——"

The other was panting helplessly. Hysterics were coming on. She said not a word. Her mother took her arm and led her from the box. As I looked back vacantly and stupified, something was thrown to me, that struck me lightly on the shirt-front, much like an insect, known to naturalists, I believe—or rather not known to naturalists, by the name of a "Daddy Longlegs." It was the little section of the cable! On examination the next morning, I found that the chain was broken, and the clasp still clasped. So she must have dragged it from her neck.

I repeat, the whole situation was so desperately hopeless, that I could say nothing—do nothing. Saying or doing would only make it worse. In my desperation, a wild notion came on me of pushing the thing to a logical outrance and brazening it out by open and abandoned love-making. But they were gone. Mechanically I went after them. They were at the bottom of the stairs, at the door, and going out to their carriage, or job, or cab; it doesn't matter now. It was all up from that hour to the present. I went back to Box NUMBER TWENTY. Fatal receptacle. It was empty. The play was going on. A great sensation-scene—an interior of a railway carriage, and wires (real) all passing by (canvas on rollers, like the panoramas). The carriages lit; the passengers seen inside in rugs and travelling-caps, sleeping or reading their newspapers. The murderer had got out of the third-class carriage, and was creeping along the footboard to carry out his infamous deed, to slow music. The house was darkened: not a sound could be heard. Even the box-keepers stood at the door, and looked on with interest. Another time all this would have amused me; but now, actually, when the stage murderer was leaning his hand on the first carriage door, I rose up, left Box NUMBER TWENTY, and went home, consumed with rage, despair, and disappointment.

She married the Irish parson *after all!* He cut out the captain, as I suspected he would. He is now the Dean of Ballymascallion. The Venerable! Ha, ha!

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE DEAR GIRL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," &c.

CHAPTER XXII. A CRUEL REVELATION.

MUCH interest was beginning to attend the proceedings of Vivian and Lucy, as it was now known to the tattle-mongers that the colonel could only stay a short time longer, and had received imperative orders to join his regiment at Gibraltar within a month. That news had indeed just arrived. Mr. West heard it from Captain Filby, to whom he had latterly been gracious, finding him useful.

"He'll leave her there, as sure as my name is Filby. And serve 'em right. It's the usual thing. I know, every town we left, we marched out leaving a batch of deserted virgins crying, and with hearts broken. Any officer that marries is a born donkey. If I had a regiment, and any of my fellows was to make a fool of himself in that way, I'd make his life a burden to him, I would. As for that Vivian, he means nothing—nothing of business, sir, I can tell you. Not he. But he's not in bad hands, and that Dacres won't let him go without something down."

It was noticed, too, with infinite satisfaction by the gossip-mongers, that Lucy was growing low-spirited. Here was something dramatic to watch. It assumed, as of course, that the colonel was "too knowing" to let himself be "hooked," and was making preparations to retire cleverly and decently from his position. All their sympathies were naturally with him, and it was hoped that he would "escape." They relished specially Miss Lulu's position, who had "jilted" the other, and would now be fairly jilted in her turn. The colony, therefore, in possession of this prospect, was very happy and pleasant, and Captain Filby said again, it was as good as Drury Lane.

Alas! there was one to whom all this sport was as death; who was looking on with strained eyes; on whose heart this wild passion and expectancy was preying; who scarcely slept at nights, and who really seemed hurrying towards that fate which he had forecasted for himself. People would say, and will say now, "Foolish, ridiculous man! he should have more sense;" with the awkward cry, "Old enough to be her father—old enough to know better." But there is nothing so tyrannous or so overpowering as the dominion of one passionate idea on some minds; on the more tender and delicate it preys like a vampire. His old legal friends, sensible "long-headed" men, might have reasoned with him in vain. Under similar circumstances, they would have fallen into the same folly.

The Guernsey Beaufort "affaire" still held people's minds. They were king and queen of the place; and as the season was shortly to begin, it was known that then they would glitter with a double effulgence. They were holding themselves in a sort of preserve, and yet still dispensed blessings. The little dinners went on, and of this bounty Mr. Blacker was, as it were, chief almoner. But Mr. Filby, whom he had injudiciously "pooh-poohed" aside, as a man "scarcely the sort of thing, you know," was discontented, and had now become a dangerous enemy. As we have seen, he was unscrupulous, said "whatever came into his head," and had a fine stock of ill nature, which he never allowed to get low. It was a stupid blunder to have alienated Captain Filby.

His voice was heard everywhere, and other voices began presently to repeat what his had pronounced so authoritatively. "Giving a ball, are they? All right! Flowers and lights from Paris; that is, of course, from poor Fazy there at the corner. Well, that's his business."

"Why," added the captain, dropping his voice a little, "do you know what I have made it my business to find out within the last few days? *Not a tradesman in the place has seen his money yet!* Wait until these donkeys put their long ears together and find that out, for they think now that others have been paid, and their turn will come presently. Not a sou, sir. I went to Sody. Will you believe it? They owe the man over fifteen hundred francs. They gave him a hundred the first month, as a sop—as a blind. That poor fool of an upholsterer—who, I believe, has half broke himself, getting those mirrors and carpets for 'em from Paris—he has had nothing yet; but on the 25th of next month, when munseer's agent comes over laden with money, got on the rent-day, he is to be paid in full, and get an order to refurnish Beaufort Manor. Ha, ha! I give you my honour, the poor idiot told me all this."

"But they are rich," says one of the bystanders; "there is no question about it."

"Is there no question about my grandmother?"

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said Captain Filby, rather rudely. "I've said it all along. I went to half a dozen places, and they all had the same story. As for Beaufort Manor, and that rubbish, only wait till my friend West, a shrewd fellow in his way, ferrets that out. He's on the track."

"Well, I hope they'll give this ball first. They've taken the large room in the establishment expressly."

This was the most damaging conversation about the Beauforts that had yet occurred. There was something very convincing in the ingenious test made by the captain. It was soon whispered about. The Guernsey Beauforts were told of it by Mr. Blacker, who was vastly amused at the importance of the gossips, and reported it as "an uncommon good thing." Mr. Beaufort was amused. "We must send a card to that Mr. West, though he has behaved in an ungentlemanly way enough. By the way, who was it was telling me that he knows some friends in our county whom he was writing to—something of that sort? You know that would be very fortunate."

Mr. Beaufort was a little disturbed at this news, though he smiled carelessly; and, had Mr. Blacker any real observation, he would have seen a scared and terrified look in the wistful face of Mrs. Beaufort, who was sitting over in the window talking to Lucy. When the gentlemen were gone out, she said to her friend:

"Would to Heaven we were away from this place, or that we had never come! I am wretched all day long, and all night too. These stories and whispers, and this reckless expense! And why Mr. West should behave so; we have done no harm to him, never injured him. Why does he persecute us in this way? Is he a detective? What does he mean?"

"I know what he means," said Lucy, with a trembling voice. "A spy! a detective! How unworthy! how ungenerous! I could not believe it of him. But I can explain it, dear Mrs. Beaufort. It is his dislike to me. I could tell you a history about that. He has never forgiven me, because I could not force myself to marry him. Perhaps I deserved it. But it is cruel to persecute you, whom I love, for anything I have done. I shall stand by you, never fear, dearest Mrs. Beaufort, and shall never give you up."

"I am not worthy of such affection; I am not, indeed," said the pale lady, drawing herself away. "Oh, you don't know me, and will turn against us, with all the rest of the world."

"Never!" said Lucy.

"Yes," said the other, hurriedly, "you will; you must. But you will be indulgent, I know. Most of us are not so accountable as we seem. We are hurried along, and must go on, having begun. But I loathe this life, I do, indeed, God knows! And I am powerless to stop it, indeed I am."

Tears were in her eyes. Lucy took her into her arms passionately, and the two ladies exchanged all their sorrows. When she left her, she walked fast, full of a grand purpose.

"It must be stopped. If he is not so utterly changed. He was once noble and generous; I will humble myself so far as to appeal to him. If that fails, I shall not be afraid to do battle with him. What have I done to deserve his hate?"

She went to him straight, at his house; she found him alone. He was sitting with his face between his hands. He started up as he saw her, his fiery eyes looking through her.

"A visit from you?" he said.

"Mr. West," she said, firmly, "I have come to you to appeal to that generosity and good feeling which you once had for me, and which I cannot think you have lost."

He had recovered himself, and become bold. "What do you wish me to do after these compliments?"

"This does not promise well," she said, colouring; "but still I feel it my duty to tell you that I cannot find words to say how pitiful, how unworthy," she added, vehemently, "I think this system you have taken up, to persecute me through them."

He looked at her, confounded; then groaned. "Oh, Lucy, Lucy," he said, "for you to say this!"

His look, and the agony that was conveyed in his voice, touched her.

"I put it too strongly, perhaps," she said; "but it is unworthy—unworthy of your fine nature, that used to be so noble, and generous, and kind, and chivalrous."

"But whose change is it?" he answered. "Whose cruelty, and coldness, and neglect have turned me into what I am now? You might have been gentle; you might have led me on."

Lucy's face expressed genuine astonishment, for it never once for a second occurred to this young lady that she was in the least in fault.

"What is this new charge? You cannot be in earnest, surely?"

"No," he said, bitterly, "you can see no earnest in things of this sort. You have destroyed me—undone me—wrecked my whole life; and now you come because you fear I may do harm to your friends. Look! see! do I speak without warrant? I have a letter here. This is what has come to me this morning. Those are the people you make your friends! There are grave doubts about them, and we shall presently know the truth."

It had not the least effect on Lucy. Her melodramatic mood was at its height. She put back the letter, and, drawing herself up, poured out bitter words.

"I ask—what I would ask of any gentleman—is to give over playing the detective. That is scarcely honourable, eh, Mr. West?"

He started indeed now, and looked at her very wistfully. "What if it be for your sake—for your cruel, ungrateful sake?"

"It would make no difference. I want no such protection," she added, now in her full dramatic bearing; "it offends, insults me. My father can take care of me, and *Mr. Vivian, too!*"

"Will he?" said he, scornfully. "You cannot be sure of that."

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"I trust him," said Lucy, scornfully, "and would trust his word. Have you any slur to throw on *that*?"

Every word of hers was a fresh stab. But he could be calm.

"You should be sure, quite sure; are you going to marry him?"

"Yes," said she, firmly.

"Years hence, I suppose? That is a long time to wait."

"Years! In a few weeks—a few days, perhaps, since you inquire."

"*In a few days!*" he repeated, wildly. "Take care, take care, I conjure you. You do not know what you are doing."

"I am growing tired of this," said Lucy; "I am indeed. Leave me and my friends in peace. This marked interest in me seems next to hatred, and I don't want it. Nothing, nothing you can do, will change me to Vivian. I tell you now, my lot is cast with him for ever. He has my whole heart; and no stories or detective arts will change me."

He stood looking at her with a dull stare, quite overwhelmed; and yet these were not the real sentiments of this young girl. She spoke in a sort of impulse; her words, and the dramatic tone of the moment, carried her away. She had only wished to make a warm protest.

"Then stay with him," he said, in a sort of fury, "and keep; and never will I interfere, whatever happens. On your own head be it. Cast your lot with him; love him, then. I have done with it. I have done with you. Leave me now; leave me at once. Go away from me! I do not wish to see you again! Go!"

She was shocked at the change that had come over him, and, for the first time, it seemed to her that he was ill. Again she was the old Lucy, and compassionate grief for his piteous state overwhelmed her, and she went over to him.

"I don't know how to express what I mean. I did not mean to wound; but if I could only explain! What have I done? You know yourself—you must recollect what you agreed on—that if I did not find in time that I could love you. You remember that; and I cannot help loving *him*."

"Go away—go away!" he said, starting up fiercely. "Are you doing this on purpose? Do you want to make me mad? Go away, I conjure you."

She went sorrowfully, terror-stricken. As she came out, she was confronted on the landing by a tall prominent figure, who lifted her arms, and said, in a half-whisper, as she passed her by:

"God, in his almighty vengeance, punish you for this; and He will!"

CHAPTER XXIII. THE BEAUFORTS.

Fitful, fevered, troubled days those were for the actors in this crisis. The hours seeming to fly by for Lucy, so much had she on her little mind. The colony was vastly entertained—full of expectancy as to how things would really turn out. There was so much to turn out; and everything, be it remembered, must be determined within a week or so. Clouds, indeed, were gathering; the air was heavy; and in the mean time preparations for Mr. Guernsey Beaufort's grand entertainment, to which the mayor and prefect even was coming, went on. The host was pronounced "a delightful, agreeable fellow," who, with no airs, was up there superintending decorations, which the confiding upholsterer was putting up. That poor craftsman had sent away orders, and was getting all sorts of things down from Paris. Twenty years later we should have heard him warning his children against the English—warning them, too, in a miserable little shop, in a smaller town than Dieppe. Thoughtful people would have remarked the curious change which a few weeks' "training," as Captain Filby called it, had wrought in the young Mrs. Wilkinson, the pretty rustic. "She's in good hands, my boy," the same judge of men and manners remarked. And yet Mr. Ernest Beaufort, to eyes of more skill and experience, would have seemed "a bad style of man," with rather inferior manners, and no air of refinement or breeding about him. But to the foolish "young thing" from a country parish he seemed the pink of gentility, and perfection itself.

A change, too, had come over Mr. Wilkinson, her husband. From being a "soft," good-natured "slob" of a man, a "thorough ass," as Mr. Blacker and some of his young men called him—a "niais," as he seemed to the Frenchmen—he had come to take airs. He went about with importance, and was admitted into the sort of council of the place, composed of Mr. Blacker, Mr. Beaufort, and some more. They consulted him a good deal, as representing the money interest. But the worst change of all was the change of relationship between the husband and wife, which now began to be noticed by not a few. To Captain Filby it was a special source of enjoyment.

"I was just behind them," he said, "and they didn't see me; and they were at it ding dong. She gave it to him up and down, sir. 'Don't interfere with me; you have no right to do it, and I won't put up with it. Every one is laughing at you, if you only could see it.' Then, sir, he blew up. 'You shouldn't speak to me in that way; it's very improper, and *I* won't have it.' 'You won't have it!' says she, with the most spiteful little laugh you ever heard in the whole course of your life, sir. Oh, it will come to something presently, mark my words; it's as good as a stall at Drury Lane, sir."

These "tiffs" had nothing to do with Mr. Ernest Beaufort's attentions. Things would have been in a healthier state had such been the case. But the dull man, in his own conceit, thought she was the attraction of the party, and considered, by a curious infatuation, that Mr. Beaufort's homage was indirectly addressed to him—to his worth, standing, &c.

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thus things grew worse, and one day Captain y—always watching—reported that he had the "pretty thing" break away from her and with flushed cheeks and angry eyes, ry as a little game cock, sir; and I have hed 'em all day since, sir, and they've never en."

here had been, indeed, an open battle; and worst was, the lady had flown for sympathy er friend and counsellor, who felt deeply for wrongs. "I watched them down to the , and they sat there a couple of hours on nch. They didn't think Jack Filby had his on 'em," was the captain's report. She told her troubles—"persecutions," she d it—to Lucy, her friend, who quite entered them, and was indignant at the "cruelty" persecution of the husband. She considered whole quite harmless, and really admired generous chivalry of Mr. Beaufort, who terestedly "stood by" the young wife, m her husband was so persecuting.

ich was Miss Pringle's training. "We all our trials, dear," she said. "You t know what I have to suffer."

was noticed that there was in her face, a little wistfulness and anxiety; explained, hose who watched, by the gradual approach he fatal sailing of the Duchess of Kent. an himself was noticed to be downcast and ess, with an affected eagerness, which did deceive the wary.

He'll slip out, if there's a chance," said captain, with zest, "and God speed him! he don't see his way, exactly. That rap es is wide awake, sir, and won't let "

r. Dacres, however, seemed quite cheerful unconcerned. Indeed, he owned he never so happy for a long time. What puzzled and, at the same time, constituted this iness, was the miraculous freedom he en- l from duns and persecutors. What ed him more, was a polite letter from t bloodsucker, Levy," as he always called speaking of the "little balance standing ," and adding, if he was at all "distressed," ould be happy to assist him to a moderate nt.

The man's transfigured, Lulu! What's meaning of it? Maybe—I know Romilly, Wilberforce, and the good men were for maybe they've done away with arrest and isonment for debt. That must be it, or some- g like it. By the Lord, if that's the case, Harco's himself again, and a made man! be at the juries again, my duck, tipping the pure native, appealing to their noblest lses. I tell you what, Lu," he said, be- ng grave; "as soon as your little busi- is settled, and I see my little sweet ifactured into MRS. COLONEL VIVIAN, I'll over and look about me. Poor papa will his honeymoon too."

hus we see Mr. Dacres reckoned on the ng event as quite certain, or affected to). The truth was, he was a very shrewd, clever fellow, under all his fitfulness and want of steadiness. He had his own plan fixed.

"I won't flurry the man, or bother him," he said. "I see he's in some fix; but I'll let him take his own way, like a gentleman, until it comes to the day week of the sailing, my boy. Then I'll *slap* down on him, and come to business."

Vivian, meanwhile, unconscious of this resolve, and feeling that Mr. Dacres was treating him with even an extra heartiness, was growing low-spirited in this miserable dilemma, and was walking along gloomily, when Mr. Blacker passed him, full of importance.

"I am in a hurry," he said. "Sorry I can't stop to tell you the news. Such an arrival—such an addition! Mr. Parkes and his friend, son of Judge Parkes, one of our English bench. One of the nicest, most aile-gant mannered men, now—such *kair*teousness," as he called it, "and a high, well-bred air. And they have just come in time for our ball. I got them to the Royal, and must run up to see that Le Buff has taken care of 'em. By the way, his friend is in the army—quite in your way. I shall be proud to bring you and Mr. Morton together. Excuse me, I really cannot stay."

Vivian listened to him absently. When he was gone, he said, half aloud:

"What am I to do? What a situation! But it is all my own folly and want of humanity. I might have waited, after all. It was only decency. But what *am* I to do now?"

In another moment he saw Mr. Blacker pointing towards him, "in charge," as it were, of two gentlemen, walking in advance of them in his eagerness, flourishing something. Vivian turned round h[illegible]ily, but Mr. Blacker was down on him in a moment.

"I brought them," he said—"I have brought them. Fortunately, just met them in time. I want them to stay for the ball."

"Why, my dear Beau——"

"What, Vivian!" said the other, hastily, stopping him; "only think of meeting you here! I am so glad;" and he took his arm and led him aside. "I want to get rid of this old bore here, and leave him to Parkes. Look here; will you recollect not to call me by my name of Morton Beaufort, but only Morton? I have a reason, which I will tell you of by-and-by. We shall have some fun presently, never fear. And I have come a long way for it. Parkes has a friend here he wants to see." And the two gentlemen presently began to talk on old times with the eagerness of military acquaintances, and Vivian presently had let his present difficulties pass from his sight.

These few weeks—the last few weeks of this story—were flurried. Every actor had a sense that something was drawing on, and a destiny to be accomplished in some fashion. At that very time Lucy was in her room, with Mrs. Wilkinson sitting on the sofa with inflamed eyes, and now and again gushes of tears, telling her "miserable story."

Some officious people about the place—"not

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the quasi-virtuous," as Mr. Dacres called them, who would not give themselves such trouble—had gone privately to Mr. Wilkinson and warned him. Every one was talking, they said; and such a pity! Mr. Wilkinson coloured; grew hot. It came on him like a revelation; he had never seen it in that light before, though he might have noticed what they now called his attention to. He had considered it rather evidence of his popularity, a compliment to his important position in the colony. He had presently lashed himself into a sort of fury, and had gone pompously to his wife to require an instant change of conduct. He would not have himself spoken of in that way. He was not a person to be made free with. But the lady, untrained as she was, had already learned a few arts, useful, as being inflammatory on such occasions. These she could fix lightly in her husband's neck, as the chulos do their arrows at a bull-fight. And she at once galled him by the cold inquiring stare of angry surprise, as who should say, "This is all a joke."

"It is not," said he, answering the look, "and I won't have it. I'm not going to be talked about here. And I tell you what, unless I have a distinct engagement that you do not speak a word to that man at this ball, I shall not allow you to go."

The lady gave a forced and mocking laugh, another of the bandillero's arrows in his neck.

"I shall speak to Mr. Ernest Beaufort, and walk about with him as usual. I am not going to make myself ridiculous for any one, and—I shall go."

"We shall see," said he, trembling with rage.

This was the first cannon-shot, and before evening everybody knew there had been a tremendous battle royal, with a defiance and challenge, and all were naturally looking forward to see how it would end. "Was there ever such a poor old donkey?" Captain Filby said. She had rushed to her friend.

"He will beat me, I suppose, the next thing," said Mrs. Wilkinson. "He treats me as if I were some wretched Turkish slave, and would sell me if he could—so Mr. Beaufort says."

Lucy was a little startled at this name. "It is very unkind of him. But he will see he has done wrong, and I am sure he is good at heart. But it is very improper of him to speak to you in that way. Still, dear, I wouldn't encourage Mr. Beaufort to say such things."

"Oh, Mr. Beaufort understands him perfectly. He knows men, and women too, as he says. In London no man dare speak so to a lady who was his wife. He would be horsewhipped by any gentleman standing by."

Lucy was a little confounded at these new views. But how could she confute them? But of this she had a natural instinct, that it was wrong and dangerous to be making a confidant of a gentleman like Mr. Beaufort. She was glad of the opportunity it gave her, and now spoke seriously to her friend.

"We must hope for the best, and things will come right by patience and waiting. But I think it would be a pity you should say anything more about it to Mr. Beaufort. This is such a strange wicked place, and they say such things."

"I don't mind them," said she. "When a husband ceases to be a friend, we must look for others. Mr. Beaufort is my true friend. He has advised me all through, and will do so. I trust in him; and if, as he says, a husband proves unworthy of you, and behaves *brutally*, you are not bound to keep measures with such a savage."

"Oh," said Lucy, shocked, "he could not have said *that*."

Misunderstanding her, the other took a letter from her bosom. "He did indeed. See here: I got this just before I came out. I am guided by him in everything, and he says, if I only trust him, he will bring me through everything. For he feels like me in everything, he says. We have the same thoughts and the same wishes—that I was made to adorn the most brilliant scenes of fashion and court. Ah, what a contrast! he so gentle, and soft, and devoted, and that——"

"Hush!" said Lucy, greatly scared; "you must not think or talk of these things. It is not right, and will lead to mischief. You should not see so much of that man."

"Why?" said the other; "why not, pray? He wants me to go and meet him now, down beyond the lighthouse—what he calls our 'favourite tryst,' where he goes himself alone, and thinks of all sorts of things," she added, with a little confusion. The foolish lady could not conceal her pride at this conquest. "I am going there now."

"No, no, you must not, for my sake! It is mischievous, dangerous. Here is pen and paper; write a line and say you can't go, and drop him gradually."

"How absurd you are, dear!" said she, laughing in a forced manner. "You don't quite understand these things; you are not married yet. Oh no; I can quite take care of myself. What, drop Mr. Beaufort, my kind friend? Besides, I want him to advise me. What do you think? I did not tell you. But he said something of my not going to the ball. Did you ever hear of such tyranny? As Mr. Beaufort says, that ought to bring it to a crisis. We shall see; we shall see."

Lucy was helpless, and, beyond mere entreaty, could do nothing with this lady. She was frightened by the whole. It gave a sudden proof of the dreadful nature of the place. And on this earth there is no more startling embodiment of the power of evil than a change of a character from being good. Her own troubles and anxieties, now gathering, added to her depression. Her father came in, as he said himself, "gay as a dozen o' larks." He sang, as he came up-stairs, his favourite chant:

"The light in her eye,
That mirrors the sky,
And kindles a flame in my own—
My own!
And kindles a flame in my own.

Well, Lulu, my sweet, dear girl, I've been

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up and down, here and there, about everywhere, singing the one song. Everybody's got the glad tidings by this time."

"What glad tidings, Harco?"

"The wedding, you witch. The nuptials. 'Take thou this ring, love,' and all that," he added, quoting from an opera then in the first flush of popularity. "Thursday three weeks, my pet, is the joyful day. Sing——". Here Mr. Dacres devotionally:

> "Sing the glad day,
> While we thus humbly pray,
> Join in his praise.

Yes; Thursday three weeks, at half-past ten in the morning. God save the King!"

Lucy's eyes brightened. "What, papa! Then Vivian has got news?"

"I don't know; maybe so. *I've* settled it that way. He and I understand each other perfectly. You are married, pet, on Thursday, same day and hour, or our friend don't make a passenger in that first line-of-packet ship, Duchess of Kent. No, no. It's settled now beyond a mistake, and far better so."

"Oh, papa," said Lucy, vehemently, "why do you interfere in this way? I understand Vivian perfectly. I know his heart thoroughly, and that he loves me, and will do anything in his power."

"I hope so. The only thing on my mind, sweet, is how to raise the breakfast. It won't be so hard. A wedding means money and a little furnishing. We'll have a few—just a few, and a speech or two, in the good English way. I'll have a Frenchman or two, just to show 'em how we can tickle up a jury. But I'll not let in those impostors, the Beauforts. Don't let 'em think it. Not one of 'em."

"Oh, why not, Harco dear? They will be so offended."

"They're Brummagem, I fear. As for that snob, the brother—mind, I tell you—he's a humbug!"

"Oh, papa," said she, suddenly, "that poor lady, Mrs. Wilkinson, has just gone, and I don't know what will become of her. How can we help her?"

"Don't come to me, sweet, said he, ruefully. "I'll want every nap. we can scrape——"

"It's not *that*, Harco." And she began to tell him the whole story.

"Is that all? He's a common fellow enough. Mind, I say it. As for the woman herself, she's a weak poor thing."

"Oh, I see her coming back again," said Lucy, running to the window. "Oh, you will see her, papa—speak to her. Won't you?"

"I will, I will, pet. Lovely woman!" added he, breaking into a quotation.

> "Angels are painted fair to look like you.

Ah, my dear Mrs. Wilkinson, come back to see me, I know. You made me out at the window."

"No," said she, hurriedly. "I wanted to settle with Lucy. Would you let me go with you to this ball?"

"You are not going, though," said Lucy, reproachfully. "Oh no."

"Not going!" said Mr. Dacres. "Why not? Would you have us getting there into realms of eternal night, groping our way distracted, with the lamp that should brighten our course quenched and in darkness?"

"My husband unreasonably wishes to keep me away, simply to annoy me, and, I suppose, disgrace me before the people."

"Lulu, darling, run and tell poor mamma I'll come to her presently. She's not herself at all. Now, my dear ma'am, tell me what's this? what's your good man been doing?"

The lady again entered on the story of her wrongs very excitedly. She was indiscreet and young, as we have said, and as weak as to tell this story to the merest stranger.

He listened gravely. "But what about this fellow, young Beaufort?"

"What about him?" said she; "what but this, that he is my friend and my protector."

"I hope it will never come to *that*, ma'am," he said, gravely. "You couldn't have picked out a worse, I can tell you. He's a poor creature, Mrs. W., and you'll get no credit by the transaction."

"I shall get sympathy," said she—"sympathy and kind words, which are a great deal to me."

"No, no. Not at all. Believe me, I have an interest in you, because my little dear girl here has. But we men, you know, that knock about here, and knock about there, we see and say more than our prayers. And Mr. Ernest Beaufort, as he calls himself, is just the lad to have his fun out of the transaction. He's a poor unchivalrous creature, and would sacrifice any one or anything. Harcourt Dacres knows men, I can tell you."

Here Lucy came fluttering back, her cheeks flushed. "He is below; he is coming up-stairs. Ah! this was what you came back for!"

"As I live, no," said the lady, passionately. "Will you believe me, I never knew it—never!"

"I tell you what," said Mr. Dacres, with a twinkle of enjoyment in his eye, "shall we have a little bit of a play—true comedy? Just get into that next room, both of you, d'ye hear me? We'll just draw this wisp of a portière, and no one will be a bit the wiser."

"Just as you like."

Lucy was fond of "a bit of fun," and overcame any scruples in her friend by dragging her in quickly. In a moment Mr. Ernest's face was put in, and he looked round with a simple air.

"I thought——" he said; "why, are the ladies all out?"

"Ah, you yourself, Mr. Beaufort! Won't you sit down? They'll be in soon," he added, adroitly, "giving the go-by to a lie," as he afterwards said. "Mrs. W. was here a minute ago."

"Was she," said Mr. Beaufort, carelessly and insolently, "really now?"

"Oh, really now, and truly now. Sat about two feet from where you are now. Ha, ha! Ah,

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that's a funny business, Mr. Beaufort. Everybody is so amused. You began in the wrong shop, sir. An Englishman's wife, sir. Not that I think there's any harm in a little flirtation."

"Do you suppose I mind how the wretched people here amuse themselves? They know very little about my affairs, or that affair, I can tell you."

"Well, if I might speak in a friendly way, you know—they'll be in in a moment—I'd let the thing drop. Awkward things may be said. And Filby, you know, gives out that Wilkinson is looking on and laughing, and is posted up to everything. I must tell you, she is not quite as simple a young lady as she looks."

"Then I could tell you, Mr. Dacres," said the other, rising to go, "some little things that would open your eyes, and open that gentleman's eyes also. If I were to take two passages in the next packet, I dare say you could not guess for whom I would take one?"

"'Deed I could not," said Mr. Dacres, laughing. "We never should here. Who is to slip off next?"

"That gentleman may give out *his* story, if he likes; but I could surprise him very much one fine morning. If I were just to crook my little finger, and give the signal, Mr. Dacres, some one would follow me down to the packet very cheerfully. So much for your gossiping stories; so much do *they* know about it now!"

"Then you ought to blush for telling such a thing, and I take leave to tell you you're a shabby sort of admirer, Mr. Ernest Beaufort. Ha, ha! Excuse my *franchise*, as our friends here say. Must go out now, as I have a little business. Come with me, my brave caballero. You're a broth of a boy among the ladies. Ha, ha! You don't mind my fun, do you? So you have only to take a place in the packet, eh? No, no. I wouldn't like to put that to Lucy, sir; it wouldn't hang together."

"I don't understand you," said the young man, colouring.

"I hold by what I say, and I could prove it at any moment, too. I never speak without the card. I have only to say the word, and that lady——"

"Well, it's wonderful! Come along."

Mr. Dacres said afterwards he never was in such a mortal fright, for he was sure the woman would burst out, and there would be a scene. "And I heard the dress give a rustle inside," he said. The whole thing reminded him of Drury Lane and Brinsley's lady behind the screen. "And I think," added he, "I managed the whole a little cleverly."

When Mr. Beaufort was gone, Mrs. Wilkinson came out, a picture of shame, her eyes bent on the ground. Lucy remained sensibly in the little room.

"Don't speak—don't say another word, Mr. Dacres," said Mrs. Wilkinson. "What *am* I to do? Oh, that I should have come to such a degradation! To hear a wretch like him daring to speak of me in that way! But it is my own folly, my own folly."

"He knows no better, my dear lady. Wait until by-and-by. You saw how easy I took his fine manners. I always 'smoked' him from the first. We'll hear something about all this in a day or two."

MIDGES IN OFFICE.

The qualities of the midge family are imperfectly appreciated by the world. To a midge's gentle sting a fleabite is ferocious, and a fleabite, as every one knows, is a synonym for something insignificantly small. Uncle Toby would never have opened the window, and made his humane speech to a midge; for a midge's titillation would have been unfelt. This is when the insect discharges its proper functions. But human midges are the small people who are dangerous only when their vocation is mistaken, and power is given them for more than to flutter and to hum. Buffon's remark on insects generally, that they "can live a long time though deprived of those organs which are necessary to the higher ranks of nature," is eminently true of these midges. Breaking a butterfly on a wheel would be justifiable if the butterfly were placed in a position to destroy hundreds of human beings, and make life a burden to thousands more. Shake the "painted dust" from creatures pitchforked into place, and you behold a form of evil which is a burning reproach to the House of Commons and the country. The system under which midges are especially dangerous, the system which makes what is called "interest" the high road to permanent appointments at the head of government offices, whose nominal heads go out with the ministry, is the direct cause of more flagrant evils than it would be easy to enumerate.

This system may give a Fribble the chief prise of a department, and make social qualifications a passport to office and to power. Parliamentary puppets are thus the scapegoats of the men really lax; and while the honourable gentleman explains, or apologises, or defies the House of Commons and the public, our friend the midge smiles complacently from behind the official canvas below, and pulls strings and dictates the squeaks of his puppets, serenely satisfied with a system which gives him a full share of the halfpence, and apportions the blows and jeers to his automaton partners. Since the kings of England gave up whipping boys, there has been nothing more humorously unjust than to reward faithful party service by making it the tool or the incubus of "abiding scribes;" and since "farming" our taxes was abandoned, there has been nothing more profligate than giving members of the midge family valuable appointments in return for private services.

Let us consider what an official midge, or "abiding scribe," is, whom he represents, and for what he is actually, though not nominally, responsible. He is the board. Cabinet ministers delegate their powers to him. The welfare, pros-

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perity, and daily happiness or discomfort of a large body of educated men depend upon his fiat; and the life and death of thousands of hapless sufferers may hang upon that slender and impalpable thread, a midge's policy. If a permanent officer be able, conscientious, industrious, he hears others praised for his own acts; and if he be a midge, he knows that his political colleagues will be heartily abused for *his* incompetence. If his public services depend upon moral courage, if their proper exercise involve discussion and possible hostility out of doors, but one course is open to the midge. He must from the very nature of things prefer darkness to light, and his official career is one long, nervous, timid "hushing up." The business of his life is to keep his department in the shade, and make it negatively popular by dint of quiescence and indifference. His policy is tortuous and sly, partly from the necessities of the case, partly because he is a midge. But it is unscrupulously direct in its aim at keeping the public in the dark. "Though parliamentary puppets may come and go, let me be paid for ever," is the unspoken burden of the midge's song; and it is not surprising if, to secure this end, he throws dust into inquiring eyes, and putting up his men in buckram, his underlings, to be shot at, merrily burks all damaging papers and troublesome reports.

Every day tells us of mysterious gaps in some department, between cause and effect; of "orders" neglected or defied; of inspections and examinations being rendered futile; of "moral influence" misapplied; of refusals to hold inquiries; of misery, disease, and death; and one is apt to wonder whether a midge can be at work. It seems incredible that in the face of a roused and indignant public opinion the inspectors of at least one department should still sleep on. There *must* be some sort of activity in their several districts. There must have been some sort of form kept up between them and the head office in the times gone by. They probably made occasional representations as to the needs of local establishments, and the pinching ignorance of local functionaries; and if they did not, it was clearly some one's duty—perhaps a midge's—to reprimand them. But it would be in strict accordance with all that is known of midge life, if reports were indorsed "*Put By*," if complaints were discouraged, and if the least watchful and most mealy-mouthed of inspectors were most popular. To complain of arrangements under which, say, paupers are killed, to ask for decent ventilation, and proper medical attendance and nursing for the sick, is to cast upon the guardians the odium of spending money. Altercations and refusals are in this case possible, and unpopularity certain. Now guardians, as a class, possess considerable electoral power, and are nearly always able to have awkward questions put in the House of Commons concerning the nature and constitution of a department which interferes with them.

The midge has considerable power for annoyance over the men whom he wishes to keep quiet in every department of the State. In all official arrangements, in the removal from one district to another, in petty malignity, he can either act himself, or so pull the strings as to make his parliamentary chief inflict pain. "Teapot" subordinates—that is, officers who are so absolutely void of offence to those they are sent to control as to receive testimonials to their urbane uselessness—are the men likely to be dear to a midge's heart. It would be well worth a midge's while to incite, to bribe, to threaten this department into combining the maximum of official formulary with the minimum of official work, and so be saved from what is his greatest horror—an inquiry into his own functions and pay. Give a man power over the purse-strings; let it be seen that he can promote a clerk or a clerk's son for obsequious compliance and diligent misdoing; let the painstaking and conscientious be stigmatised as "impracticable" and punished accordingly, and it is marvellous how speedily a department will mould itself on the midge's model. The few who stick out are marked men, to be mulct of income and degraded at the very earliest opportunity. The midge's handiwork has prospered, and a grave public scandal arises.

A few people have been choked or poisoned, or slow torture has been inflicted on the dying, and a cry is raised throughout the country, Who is to blame? Inspectors are arraigned; the parliamentary secretaries or chiefs questioned in the House of Commons, and the department heartily abused. But the midge escapes scot-free. A creature so seemingly insignificant is never thought of as the real culprit; and while the officials—whose career he has directed, and who have had to choose between insubordination to their superior and neglect of their plain duty—are summoned to the bar of public opinion, the midge escapes. In all the comments and strictures upon "the department," even by those who writhe most under his sting; in all efforts to alter its machinery, its mainspring has remained untouched.

How long is this to last? How long are we to be hoodwinked by the midge family? How long cajoled into awarding blame to the wrong men? Let the scandals of the last few years—some of which make our social administration a byword and reproach—be read by the light of our midge theory, and we shall have at least an intelligible solution of a problem hitherto unsolved. Take the midge for granted, and all else follows. A famine comes over the land. A populous and industrious county is reduced from competence to poverty the most dire and bitter. Extraordinary means are taken to meet an extraordinary emergency, and an act brought in and passed by the government, having the relief of a vast district and the employment of thousands for its aim. A commissioner is selected for his previous knowledge of the hapless county, and for his general fitness for the post. The measure just passed is statesmanlike, and the instrument well chosen; the Press blows gentle gales

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of approval, and one of the most arduous duties of modern times seems to be satisfactorily performed. Suddenly the wind changes, and finding employment for starving men is denounced as the profligate job of a dishonest government. Statistics and facts carefully cooked to prove this foregone conclusion force themselves mysteriously into publicity. The midge has been at work. Sensitive as dwellers in glass houses must always be, that insect sees in the usefulness of others a reproach and possible injury to itself. "Society" jargon is called into play, the vulgarity and selfishness of the wealthy inhabitants of the suffering district are sneered at, and the impropriety of a government department performing useful and humane functions is angrily censured. The midge, it must be again remembered, is so far irresponsible, that his gibes are still launched from behind the cover of his own obscurity. His official position suffices to give his words and actions an influence for harm, while it protects him from public argument and censure.

For years past England, the midge's paymistress, has laboured under the reproach of permitting the helpless to die in her streets and thoroughfares. Boasting her superiority over bureau-ridden lands, she had allowed her capital—the wealthiest, busiest, and most charitable city in the world—to kill off its annual per-centage of outcasts with terrible regularity. The philanthropist, or the man about town, could, at the most inclement seasons, point to droves of shivering wretches sleeping on the same pavements. Men, women, and children, hungry and half naked, could be looked for at the same door-steps, throughout the winter nights, with as much certainty as the sentry at Buckingham Palace, or the lion on Northumberland House. Workhouses admitted a few applicants, and sent the rest away desolate; or did not admit at all, as the local authorities were brutal, or, in a parochial sense, humane. "These casual wards are full," was the permanent inscription on the walls of the workhouse of the richest parish in London. Laws had been enacted and regulations passed to provide for all destitute wayfarers whose necessity was urgent; in the face of which sick women, tottering old men and starving children, were, night after night, refused bare shelter, and practically told to steal or die. Private benevolence erected refuges, which private charity endowed; but the evil was practically unabated despite the outspoken strictures in parliament and by the press. Official midges sharpened their stings. We had long official papers, possibly prompted by the midge, in which the criminality of being homeless, destitute, and hungry, was judicially urged; and the wickedness of aiding the wounded by the wayside until after close examination into their credentials, was severely reprobated. We had midge schemes for maltreating those relieved and for making relief penal; but the plain duty of the community, that come what would no one should die of hunger at our doors, was something more than ignored. After long years the practice of allowing paupers to perish every winter had been denounced time out of mind by the plain people who could not recognise starving your neighbour as the whole duty of man; after the country rung with indignant complaints of the system which made these horrors possible, it was determined to make an effort to grapple with the difficulty. "The department" was to have practical usefulness thrust upon it. Its canons were to include the right of enforcing the bestowal of relief, shelter, a crust, and little more, to destitute wanderers. The shameful sight of human beings dying untended at our very doors was to be made possible no longer; and our streets were to be relieved of their constantly abiding eyesore. The metropolitan workhouses were to be placed on the same footing, and a task of labour to be rigidly exacted from every temporary sojourner within their walls. In short, the laws previously in existence, but which had fallen into abeyance through the selfishness of parochial boards and the existence of official midges, were to be supplemented by a measure which not only appealed to that selfishness by making the cost of relieving casual paupers chargeable on a common fund, but made it clear to the outside public that the "urgent necessity" just quoted was in itself a title to relief. The parishes were extremely angry. Indignation meetings were held, at which the grand principle of local self-government was substantially defined to be starving paupers with impunity; and, as a matter of course, the midges, if our theory be correct, shouted their little official shout with the crowd they thought the largest. Society was informed that London would become a mere nest of vagabondage, a central haunt for vagrancy; and the sharpness of the midge's punctures were, it is natural to imagine, inflicted on those able and willing to argue against the bill. A judicious circular to officials amenable to midge influence, a few hints cunningly thrown out, a repetition of the heartless midge maxims previously urged, and a formidable mass of adverse official theories, were readily strung together in support of the guardian view. Carry out this pernicious doctrine of assisting the helpless; be weak enough to prevent deaths in the streets, and the decadence of the nation will follow, for "the board" will be abolished, and we, dear friends, be displaced. It is also possible that, in some instances, the repulsion between the responsible chief in parliament and the chief who was Society's nominee, was complete; and that the energies and official opportunities of the one were consistently devoted to thwarting the humane legislation of the other. In any case, human life has been sacrificed, and human misery has been heartlessly and scandalously left to shift for itself. The public inquiries hitherto made in this connexion, have—if our theory be right—failed to reach the root of the evil, because they have failed to look as low as the microscopic but mischievous creatures who can poison a large system of legislation by an infliction of small stings. Let the

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light of publicity which now falls on greater objects only, flow in next, as speedily as may be, on the origin, habits, and duties of official midges.

THE YULE LOG.

THE evening was cloudless: but there hung
A cloud upon the hearts of those who sat
Beneath the moss-grown apple-tree, in midst
Of their small cottage garden; for that night
Must Sailor Charley leave them all to go
To sea.

"'Tis old," the grey-hair'd father said,
As 'mong the almost leafless boughs he gazed;
"Time was, when May beheld it full of bloom,
With clusters flushing pink and white against
The tender green; and Autumn brought a crop
Of ruddy fruit that bent the branches down,
So laden was the tree; but now 'tis old
And fit for naught. Ay, ay, we all must come
To uselessness, old age, and then—to death:
'Tis well if, while we have our youth and strength,
We put forth blossoms good, and fruit." "Say not
'Tis fit for naught!" exclaimed the cheery voice
Of Charley. "See its mossy arms, how broad
They spread, how soft and sheltering extend
Above our heads, as if to gather us
Beneath their loving canopy, and make
Us feel the more together here at home.
At home! where still my ev'ry thought returns
And nestles happily while I'm away!
I see you all, in thought, assembled here,
And sending out your thoughts to me across
The sea. Say not 'tis fit for naught, the dear
Old apple-tree! And more, besides the screen
It makes above our rustic seat, yon clump
Of gnarlèd canker'd wood, which grows apart,
A burly limb excrescent, just will serve
For our next Christmas log, our good yule log!"
"But you will not be here to fell it down,"
The wrinkled mother, sighing, said. "Ah, son,
How many ways shall we your absence feel!"
"If I'm not here to fell the clump, at least
I will return for when 'tis burnt!" he cried.
"I cannot be away at Christmas-tide;
I must be back among you all by then.
I must, I will, be with you all, be sure!
Now, mind my words, you'll see me; I will come!"
His wrinkled mother smiled to hear his tone
Of confidence; his sister Peggy, with
Her merry eyes, look'd gladly up; and Ben,
His younger brother, gave a joyful shout;
While gentle Mary Gray, his sweetheart and
His promised wife, drew closer to his side,
And press'd his arm with both her clasping hands.
"You will? You will be sure to come? You will
Get leave of absence, then, you think? I fear'd
It would not be till after New Year's-day,"
She whisper'd, with a tremble in her voice.
"Nay, that is when we shall be wedded, dear,
I trust," he answer'd low; "so, judge if I
Will not strain ev'ry nerve to come back here
Before the time; besides, I feel I must
Spend Christmas-day among you all at home;
I must, I will; so, mark my words, I'll come!
You'll see me here!" He gather'd her within
His strong right arm, and held her to his breast
With grasp as firm as were his tone and words;
And she felt hope and comfort fill her soul.
But gravely then the grey-hair'd father spoke:
"My son, 'If God be willing,' prithee, add.
Your words of cheer and confidence are right;
But say, 'If God be willing,' too, my lad."
"'Twas in my thought, I had it in my heart,
My father," Charley said. "'Tis so much part
Of all I think and hope, I speak it not
Aloud; but none the less I breathe it still
Within myself, 'neath all I say and do.
When our good ship, the Antelope, in stress
Of weather, drives amain upon some stern
Lee shore, begirt with cliffs and frowning bluffs,
Forbidding access, threatening death, my cry
Of 'Courage, messmates! We will keep her off!'
Is ever followed by a deep 'please God!'
That echoes in my soul; or when, 'mid rocks
That bristle 'neath the surging breakers white,
Rough cresting the wide waste of waters dark,
She glides with dangerous swiftness, and I shout,
''Ware rocks ahead! We'll get her through, my lads!'
'If God be willing' basses still the loud
Shrill tone wherewith I labour to outpierce
The screams of whistling winds, and din of weather:
Believe it, father, earnest faith and trust
Are ever in my heart, though not, mayhap,
Upon my lips: and so, if God doth will,
I'll surely come. But now, farewell, 'tis time
I should be gone: farewell, my mother; bear
My absence well by thinking of the day
When I shall back return: farewell, my dear
Ones all; take care of one another till
I come again to thank you for your love
Of each I love." He grasp'd his father by
The hand; his mother kiss'd; his sister and
His brother Ben he hugg'd; then snatch'd in haste
His gentle Mary to his breast, as though
He dared not trust himself or her with long
Last words: a look ineffable, but one—
One rapid, passionately stifled sob,
And he had darted off full speed—was gone.

Was gone! A world of blank forlornness lay
In those two words, which day by day were felt
By Charley's dear ones, left to understand
The full and bitter force of all involved
Therein; to try and hide from all the rest
The pain at heart of each, the loneliness,
The sense of loss and vacancy that ached
Within.—But then there came a letter, said
He'd sail'd; was well; look'd forward to the time
Of hoped-for home return; bade them be sure
To do the like; and finish'd with his own
Bright cheerful tone of confidence and trust.
The days went by; the weeks; they swell'd to months;
Then came the autumn winds, that swept the trees
And bared them of their leaves, that sobb'd and moan'd,
And fill'd the throbbing hearts of those at home
With fears for him they loved at sea; and yet
Withal a hope, a growing hope, a hope
Expectant, yearning, day by day more strong,
That he might any moment be at home,
Might take them by surprise, and come at once.
December with its frosty sun set in.
No rain, no snow; but bracing, clear, and sharp.
"High time," thought Ben, "to hew the Christmas log.
Since Charley cannot get away, and be
At home to fell the clump himself, I must;
That it may dry and season, ready for
The Christmas blaze upon our cottage hearth.
That ruddy glow and sparkle of the good
Yule log! How cheerily it looks! How well
Our Charley loves it! And how like himself!

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So full of warmth and brightness, comfort, life,
And joyousness! My spirits always rise
Beside the Christmas fire, and when I'm near
My brother Charley; both inspire a glad
Courageous trust." As thus the lad ran on
Within himself, he struck and chopp'd amain;
And dealt the gnarlèd branch such sturdy blows
With well-directed axe, that soon he cleft
A wide division 'twixt the bole and it;
Another stroke, and then it fell to earth.
But as it fell, the dull, deep, heavy thud
Of falling wood was blended with a low
Strange sound, a sound as of a human cry,
A cry half forced from lips by deadly pain,
A moan, a gasp, an anguish-utter'd tone.
It startled Ben, who sharp look'd round, as if
Some wounded creature needs must be close by.
No one he saw; the little orchard ground
Was still and peaceful in the frosty air;
The sparkling rime was glist'ning on the trees
And grass. Had one white fragment dropp'd, it might
Almost be heard, so silent was the spot;
And then, with shrilly softness, there trill'd forth
The few clear notes of sudden-singing robin,
That made the silence but the surer seem.
The boy drew breath; for he had held it check'd,
As list'ning whence that smother'd cry should come.
What could it be? Or had he really heard
A cry at all? For, now 'twas gone, he scarce
Believed 'twas aught beyond a fancied sound.
And yet it had been wonderfully like
A human tone, and even strangely like—
Or so he for a moment thought—the voice
Of Charley; but he drew a lengthen'd breath,
And laugh'd that notion from him, as he stoop'd
And raised the sever'd branch, and bore it on
His shoulders to the wood-house, where he sang
A blithe old Christmas carol while he shaped
The clump into a goodly sizèd log
For burning when the time should come.
And soon
It came—the time of peace, good will, and joy,
The starry eve, the Christmas-eve, the eve
Of eves; and yet no news of Charley!
"He will not come to-night, he'll come to-morrow,"
They said with ill-assumèd smile and look
Of confidence; for still they would not let
Themselves admit they felt a doubt he would
Return for Christmas-tide, as he had said
He should. And Peggy stole away, and went
Alone to lay the fire upon the hearth
In their bright parlour-room, where twice or thrice
A year the cottage party met to keep
Their rarely-holden festivals in state.
Already she had deck'd it with green boughs
Of shining holly, beaded coral-red;
With wreaths of ivy, dark and glossy-leaf'd;
With clusters of arbutus and white tufts
Of laurustinus, intertwining sprays
Of fan-like arbor vitæ; while 'mid all
There hung aloft a certain mystic branch,
Its rounded-ended leaves begemm'd between
By berry pearls, 'neath which if maiden pass,
Her lips pay toll; but Peggy hurried on,
Nor glanced once up, nor shyly smiled at it;
Her mouth was grave, her eyes were downward bent,
As straight she walk'd towards the lowly hearth,
And knelt beside the heap of sticks placed there
By Ben, together with the goodly log
Of yule, all ready to her hand; she laid
The slender sticks and twigs across, a light
And well-built mass, then turn'd to lift the log;
And as she turn'd, the thought swept through her mind,
"Ah! if but Charley now were here, he'd lift
It for me with that strong right arm of his,
That always seems beside me at a need
When he's at home;" and as the thought arose,
There seem'd to rise beside her in the dusk
A stalwart form, that stoop'd towards the log
And aided her to raise it. Was she sure?
She look'd with straining eyes; ay, there it was—
The figure of her brother Charley, dark
And dimly seen, but yet none else than his;
His sailor shoulders, broad and manly back,
His curly hair, and firmly well-set head.
She could have heard the beating of her heart,
While still she kept her fixèd look upon
The form so near her, yet so far, so real
And yet so insubstantial—for it thus
Appear'd to her; but, even while she gazed,
It faded, grew more indistinct, became
A part of all the objects round it, lost
Its shape and substance, and she felt and knew
It to be naught but her own aching fancy,
That yearn'd for sight of him who absent still
Remain'd. She gave a little shrug, half smile,
Half sigh, and chid herself for giving way
To whimsies of the brain, and set herself
In earnest to fulfil her task. "To-night
We will not light our Christmas fire, but leave
It till to-morrow," murmur'd she, "when he,
We trust, will be among us, here to keep
Our Christmas-eve and day in one;" and so
Withdrew, and closed the door, and left the room
In sacred silence, darkness, solitude,
Until the morning, which she hoped would see
The place illumed by Charley's presence there,
No less than by the yule log set ablaze.

The morning came, and with it Mary Gray.
She walk'd in quietly; she ask'd no word
Of news, but in her eyes there sat a world
Of soul-assured expectance; greeted all
With loving Christmas wishes: then she took
Her part with Peggy in the busy work
Of household preparation, festive cheer
Of good old English beef, with pudding crown'd;
And, while engaged in tending on the roast,
Brisk Peggy ask'd her friend to set alight
The Christmas fire that she had ready laid.
And Mary went into the parlour-room,
So silent and so tranquil, with its shade
Of verdant boughs, its altar-hearth; a shrine
It look'd of peace and blessed Christmas joy;
A hallow'd temple, consecrate to home
And happy gladness for the time supreme.
She touch'd with flame the heaped-up wood, and watch'd
It burn; and as the lambent brightness rose
And rose, and play'd around the good yule log,
And finally enkindled it to warmth
And glow, and tower'd up a steady spire
Of candent strength, there seem'd to glide
A strong right arm around the waist of Mary,
And 'neath her gentle head a shoulder firm;
So palpably she felt them there, she could
Have cried, "He's come!" And yet she knew it was
But image of her heart's desire—a shape—
A something—mere embodying of her thought:
Those eyes that seem'd to look into her own—
That breath that crept among her hair, and swept
Her cheek—were they but reflex of her thought?
That touch of balmy softness on her lips—

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Could that be only fancy? Surely not!
Th' impression was so absolute, she gave
Her spirit up entirely to the sweet
Beatitude, and breathed aloud his name.
The loving earnest eyes withdrew from hers,
Grew dim, and seem'd to melt away; the arm
Receded, and the shoulder was no more
Beneath her leaning head. She roused herself
With effort from the dreamy bliss of strange
And actual presence that possess'd her; went
To find his parents old, to cheer them with
Her talk, and help them pass the hours away
Without too restless looking forth for him.
Yet, spite of all, their glances constantly
Would wander up the path by which he should
Appear; and still they spoke in idle phrase
Of aught beside the one thing that engross'd
Their thought: until the wrinkled mother sigh'd,
And murmur'd low: "Not come, not come; my boy's
Not come," and shook her agèd head, down bent.
"He'll come, be sure he'll come; he will be here.
He said it, mother; and you know he keeps
His word," soft whisper'd in her ear the voice
Of Mary; "trust in him; have patient hope.
Before the day is out, you'll see him here,
If God permit."

But dinner-time arrived,
And yet no Charley. "Come, we will begin,"
The grey-haired father said, with trial at
A smiling jest; "who knows but he will come
In pudding-time? In time to drink the toast
Of 'Merry Christmas and a good New Year'?"
But dinner pass'd, and still no Charley came.
Before they drew their chairs around the hearth,
The grey-hair'd father solemnly arose,
And fill'd his glass, and said, "God bless my son!
I would it had been His good will to let
My agèd eyes behold him here at home
On this blest day, to cheer our hearts, and bring
Us prospect of a surely happy year,
With him beside us; but God's will be done!"
He reverently raised his glass in act
To drink, but stood suspended, motionless:
"Great Heaven! he's there! I see him there!—my son!"
His gaze was fix'd upon the hearth, where, in
The rich red light, thrown by the Christmas fire,
He saw a form, the very figure of
His sailor son. The old man moved a step
Towards it; but 'twas gone—'twas there no longer.
"'Tis strange," the old lips mutter'd; "sure, I saw
Him there—my Charley, my own sailor lad!"
He pass'd his hand across his brows, and sank
Into his chair. "I saw him too," low said
The wrinkled mother—"saw him standing there
With smiling lips and eyes brimful of love;
I saw him clearly as I see you all.
Alas, 'twas only for a second! Gone!
He's gone! And we shall never see him more!
I know, I'm sure, it was his spirit sent,
To let us understand he's dead! my boy!
My Charley! Oh, my brave, my darling boy!"
An awe fell on them all, a deep, deep awe;
And very sad and silently they sat
Around their Christmas fire, and watch'd the log
Of yule to embers red and then to dusk
White ash die out. With heavy hearts they bade
Good night; but gentle Mary Gray soft spoke,
And said, "His word was kept; God granted him
To come. He said we all should see him here;
And God vouchsafed him to our sight. Thank God!"
She press'd her lover's parents in her arms,
And look'd them in the face with a strange calm
Of faith and trust. And ever from that night
She wore the same serene regard, and came
And went, and made his parents her chief care,
And soothed them with her placid words, and gave
The cottage light with her sweet patient look
And loving ways. But deadly pale she was,
And thin and shrunk; scarce half her former self
She seem'd in bulk, so shadowy spare she grew;
A wasted figure, hollow cheek that made
Her eyes look large unearthly, and a step
Of gliding weightlessness: a maiden ghost,
Far rather than a living girl, she moved;
And once when Charley's mother noticed it,
And said she must not grow so thin and pale,
She look'd more like a spirit than a lass
Of flesh and blood, she smiled within herself
And thought, "The more like him!" but only said
Some cheering playful words to draw away
The mother's mind from sadness.

So, the weeks
Lagg'd by, till the new year was well-nigh two
Months old: and yet no news. The sky was clear
One afternoon; the February rains
And churlish flaws had yielded to the bland
First touch of mildness. Mary stood beside
The cottage casement, looking forth upon
The moss-grown apple-tree, 'neath which she last
Had seen her sailor love ere he took leave.
His sister Peggy crept close to her, and
The two kept silent sympathetic gaze,
Each thinking of the same unspoken theme.
At length fair Peggy, once so brisk and blithe,
Said whisperingly: "Mary, if you fade
Into a slender spectre thus, you'll not
Be long with us; and we cannot afford
To lose you, dear; you must remain on earth.
My poor old father and my mother, both,
Sore need you now, and more than ever, dear
You must remain to comfort them, you must!"
"I'm going to him!" was Mary's low-breathed soft
Reply; "you will not grudge me going to him,
Dear Peggy, will you?" Peggy answer'd not;
And both the girls stood hand in hand, with eyes
Still bent upon the leafless apple-tree.
"When its first budding green appears, you'll know
Me gone to meet him, never more to part,"
Said Mary, with a tender inward voice
Of deep content. She paused, and then said, "Hush!
Look there! Do you see what I often see—
His figure, there, beneath the apple-tree?
Look, Peggy, look! and tell me if you see
It too. It seems to me so plain this time,
I cannot think but you must see it too."
The face of Peggy flushed to flame, her breath
Was held, her hands were clasp'd and raised, stretch'd forth
In eagerness of doubt and hope and joy
At what she saw. "'Tis he!" she cried, "'tis he!
Dear Mary, it is he himself come back!"
She flung the casement wide, and called aloud:
And then sprang forward Charley; darted in,
And caught his Mary in his arms before
She fell to earth. "My darling! She has swoon'd!
I fear'd it would be thus. I hung about
The garden ere I'd enter, lest you might
Have heard the tidings of my death, and sight
Of me thus suddenly should startle your
Dear mourning hearts. My Mary! sweet, look up!
Look up, my dear one! See, your sailor is
Return'd, unharm'd, unchanged—return'd to you,
To all his dear ones! Sweet, revive!" At sound

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Of his loved voice, her senses, like a flight
Of scatter'd doves, came flutt'ring back, and took
Their rest within his close embrace; while Peggy
Quick ran to tell the joyful news, and fetch
Her father, mother, brother Ben. And when
They came, and fulness of first happiness
Had calm'd a little, Charley told them how
His messmate, brave Will Hardy, had been cause
That he still lived and safely had returned.
"My friend," he added, "is at hand; he did
But stay to let my mad impatience have
Its way. Had his advice been taken, he
Would first have come, and broken the glad news;
But I could not restrain my eagerness,
And dear I might have paid for my——" He look'd
At Mary, stopp'd, and then went on. "Will's here;
I'll hail him; he shall tell you all the yarn
Of our adventures." Saying this, he gave
A seaman's shout; and through the porch there came
A bronzed young mariner, with aspect frank,
And handsome open face, who made himself
At once at home, and took his seat among
The cottage circle as he'd been a part
Of it from childhood: willingly he told
The story of his friend's and his own last
Sea-voyage; how the good ship Antelope
Had sail'd to distant unfrequented regions,
'Mid spicy islands, groved with lofty trees
Of palmy foliage, thick with jungle-wood
And rampant climbing plants, that flung their arms
In wanton lush luxuriance around
The tallest barks, festooning all the space
With garlands, drooping blossoms, pendent fruits
Of gorgeous hue; high stems behung with nuts
Colossal, rough of rind, with milky core;
Stiff spiky leaves with thorny edge, in midst
Of which rose stately pine-apples, brown gold;
And store of roots delicious, yielding food
Abundant, succulent: and told them how
In one of these far islands it bechanced
That Charley and himself, with certain of
Their crew, were sent ashore for water fresh:
"The springs," said Will, "lay up a little way
Beyond the beach, among green slopes that show'd
In emerald brightness 'gainst a dark thick wood;
And straight for these we made. We had been there
Before, though no one had we seen; the place
Seem'd uninhabited; no creatures save
The birds, who flew about in myriads,
With jewell'd wings and throats of amethyst,
Of ruby, topaz, sapphire; living gems
They glanced amid the trees. We'd fill'd our casks,
And were returning to our ship, when pounced
Upon us, like a swoop of hawks, a horde
Of savage creatures, wild and scarcely men;
So brutish were their motions, glaring eyes,
And spring ferocious, leaping at our throats,
And dashing with their clubs abrupt assault.
We kept them off as stoutly as we could,
With knives and cutlasses drawn forth at haste.
But numbers made them more than match for us.
Pell-mell they drove our messmates to their boats,
While Charley and myself were left behind:
For he had been the foremost in the fray,
And now lay senseless on the earth; a blow
Had struck him, and with dull, deep, heavy thud
He fell, with utterance of a sharp-forced cry."

Here Ben half broke into some question; but
Suppress'd it, held his breath, and Will went on:
"I raised him in my arms and bore him tow'rds
The shadow of the wood, to screen him from
The burning sun, and hide him from the horde,
Who might come back; but they return'd no more,
And solitude the most profound was mine,
Within the deep recesses of the dark
Green forest, gloom'd with thickly woven roof
Of overarching giant trees: and one
There was so huge, so aged and decay'd,
Its trunk was hollow as a cave; and this
I made our hut. I heap'd a bed of leaves,
And laid my friend thereon, and search'd his wound:
'Twas on his head, a ghastly bruising dint,
That stunn'd him into death-like torpor; pulse
There seem'd none; breath unheard; all colour gone:
I thought his life extinct, and could have wept
Hot woman's tears upon his marble face.
But near at hand I found a freshet clear,
And laved his temples with the crystal cold
Until a merest flitter stirr'd his lids,
That made my heart leap up; it show'd me that
He lived.

"He lived, indeed, but hardly lived;
So slender was the thread mysterious
That held vitality within him: long
He lay in that condition, corpse-like white
And motionless; but when at length he woke
To consciousness, fierce fever seized him, and
He raved in wild distraction; to and fro
His head turn'd ceaselessly; his arms, flung wide,
Were toss'd in vain endeavour, madly tried
To throw himself from off his couch of leaves,
And struggled with me to be up, away,
Away to England, home, and you: for so
His ravings ever ran: 'I must be back!
I promised! They expect me! Hold me not,
I say! I must, I will be back!' Then changed
His tone to gentlest deprecation, low
And plaintive, humbly suppliant: 'Dear God,
Deny me not! Vouchsafe me to return!
Oh, let them see me there at home! I said
I would be there, if such were Thy good will!
And let it be Thy will, dear God! Oh, let
It be Thy will! I cannot stay away!'
And then his earnestness would ramble off
Into faint mutterings of 'Mary's hair,'
'Those gentle, wistful eyes that soft beseech
Me to return'—of 'Peggy's merry glance
And witching smile that beckon me to come'—
And so would sigh and shiver tremblingly,
Sink down despondent, only to fling forth
Again his arms, and start into fresh raves
Of wandering delirium.

"And so
The dreary time went by, until one day,—
'Twas Christmas-eve,—he lapsed into a state
Akin to that first dreadful torpor: stretch'd
He lay, in lethargy so absolute,
His senses steep'd in such profound oblivion,
The spirit seem'd indeed to have left its cage
Of flesh, and wing'd its flight far, far away.
I knew he was not dead, for still I felt
At intervals the dull deep sluggish beat
Of his slow-toiling heart, like muffled boom
Of minute-gun from some distressèd ship
At sea: but as I watch'd him through those long,
Long six-and-thirty hours of trance, I ask'd
Myself the question, o'er and o'er again:
'His spirit is not here, 't has pass'd its bars
And flown; but whither flown?—unto the skies
Not yet 'tis gone. Then where? On earth? O'er sea?

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Can God have gifted it with power to soar
With dove-like instinct to the distant nest
Where dwell its dear ones? Hath it found its way,
Mysteriously endow'd, to that loved home
Where centre all its wishes, fondest hopes?
Hath strong desire prevailed? Doth sympathy
Exist with such intensity of might,
It can convey with magic potency
The spirit where it listeth? 'Tis not here:
Then whither, whither, hath it flown?'" "It came
To us," in low-breathed whisper, Peggy said:
"God sent it here; we saw him, felt him here;
His spirit was permitted to return
To us, while absent from its fleshly bounds:
But tell us more; go on! how he revived,
How both of you survived that time; go on,
Go on." "I've little more to tell," said Will;
"For, strange to say, from that same deadly trance
He woke to life, to health, to energy:
He told me he had seen his cottage home,
Its Christmas hearth, around it those he loved;
And seem'd restored to his old cheery strength
Of spirit by the dream, or vision, or
Whate'er it was: how may we know? Suffice
Us to adore the Power that doth create
Such miracles of sympathy in love.

"Soon after Charley was his own strong self
Again, we had the fortune good to spy
A ship not too far out in offing to
Perceive our hoisted signals: she put in,
Took us aboard, and brought us straight to port,
To England, where we hasten'd hither, that
Our safe arrival might precede whate'er
Bad tidings should perchance have got afloat
That Charley and Will Hardy had been kill'd
In an affray with savage islanders.
But here we are, return'd in health and life,
Prepared to be received as heroes of
Adventure, made the most of, cherish'd and
Caress'd. Mate Charley has, I see, secured
Already some of his earn'd welcome home,"
Said Will, with archness in the glance he cast
To where his friend sat leaning o'er the back
Of Mary's chair; "and as for me, he knew
I had no friends, no sweetheart, no dear home
To go to, so he brought me here with him,
And you have ta'en me in with such a frank
And hospitable warmth, I ne'er shall feel
Again I have no friends or home: perhaps—
Who knows?—I may here find a sweetheart too!"

He said no more just then; but on the morrow,
As Ben was showing him their cottage garden,
And telling him of what bechanced while he
Was hewing down the Christmas log, Will saw
Fair Peggy gathering some snowdrops and
Some golden crocuses to deck their room—
Their parlour-room—in honour of their guests.
He went, with sailor promptness, to her side,
And, offering help, he linger'd near. "I learn'd,"
He said, "from Charley how to picture to
Myself the merry eyes and witching smile
Of Peggy, and I dwelt upon their image
Until I grew to long to see them. Now
I see, I find them more than true to his
Description; and, beyond their beauty, they
Possess the charm of eloquence in mute
Expression, saying how her brother's friend
And fellow-wanderer is welcome, for
His sake, to Peggy. Is it so?" "Indeed
It is," she earnestly replied; "for his
Dear sake, you're dear, most dear, to all of us."
"And for my own, I would be dear to you
Yourself, sweet Peggy," he rejoined. "I know
I must seem strangely sudden and abrupt,
But not to me is this a sudden thought:
I've ponder'd on it, brooded o'er it in
The watches of the night, the hours of eve;
I felt, before I saw you, I should love—
And love you, Peggy, I most surely do,
With all my sailor heart: say, can you take
That heart and all its faithful honest love?"
Fair Peggy answer'd by no words, but eyes
And smile, with eloquence their own, said what
Look'd very like a cordial "Yes." Howe'er
That was, 'tis very certain, when the bells
Rang out the wedding-peal for Charley and
His bride, they rang besides for Will and his
Sweet Peggy. Cottage annals further say,
That when the log of yule next time was burnt,
Two christenings enhanced the festival.

THE SINEWS OF THE NATION.

"A POUND of meat without bone" is to be the future allowance of the British soldier, according to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Recruiting. When that recommendation is carried out, our soldiers will have a better raw material for dinner than any other army in Europe. The value of the meal will depend on the degree of cultivation the military cooks possess. In this addition to the daily military meal the commissioners have been fortunate, and have shown that they understand the tastes of the class from which soldiers are drawn. We are essentially a meat-eating people, and it is necessary to rise as high as the tables of the upper middle class before you meet with the elaborately dressed vegetables, the salad, and the desserts which are the usual additions to the meal of a well-paid mechanic in France or Germany.

The very deficiency of variety in our cooking makes us more critical about our meat. Indeed, it may safely be said that England is the only country where the quality and flavour of beef and mutton are appreciated—always excepting the best restaurants in Paris, where the fillet-steak is cooked to perfection, and is popular among diners of all nations. In soups and entrées, whether fried, or sautéed, or stewed; in cooking all vegetables, except potatoes plain, we bow respectfully before a French chef; but, for a plain roast, the English cook is unrivalled. He alone is able to deal with joints of size and substance, to utilise the fat and lean, to extinguish every trace of rawness, and yet retain all the delicate juices and the rich, not red, gravy that flows at the knife's point from a leg of well-fed Down or Highland mutton "like port wine."

With these universal tastes for both quantity and quality, it has not been without serious alarm that our housekeepers read from day to day, ever since the summer of 1865, accounts of the progress of a deadly, highly infectious, and absolutely incurable disease, which seemed at one time as if it would reduce the roast beef of old England to a luxury to be ranked by the side of turtle, or even to make the rising race of

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infant Britons crowd the Zoological Gardens to see a few surviving specimens of the once-common domestic cow.

A year ago we were flattering ourselves that the rinderpest—as the more infectious of cattle diseases is called by the German doctors—had been stamped out of Great Britain, slaughtered and buried; but, unfortunately, since last Christmas a series of sudden outbreaks have shown how difficult it is to neutralise the germs of this subtle animal poison, and how impossible it is to distinguish between healthy and tainted importations of foreign cattle.

We are not about to re-write a history that has already been written so many times in journals devoted to veterinary science and agriculture in English, in French, in German, in Dutch, within the last two years. A few figures in their proper place will show the influence that the rinderpest has had on the demand and supply part of the question.

The British, or rather the English, farmer has a peculiar dislike to answering the questions of an official. It is an ignorant prejudice, but it has a foundation in traditionary reason. He learned from his father, who learned it from his grandfather, that in the days of that departed respectable top-booted gentleman the government made many inquiries, which were generally followed by new taxes. The then exciseman wished to know, not only how much beer was brewed, but whether the farmer made any candles, or soap, or bricks, or tanned any hides, and whether he had paid duty on all the salt he used. Then, too, the parson of those deeply regretted times was curious as to the yield of every crop, for he took his tithes in kind. Now farmers—who, as a rule, read little, and think the more of the past—still very often look on the parson as their natural enemy, and on the government as a malicious powerful fiend that served them an ill turn nineteen years ago, that makes them alone of all producers pay a tax on produce, and is on the look-out to impose on them another. Therefore they detest the name of statistics. Besides, the English farmer is usually a tenant-at-will, paying a low rent as a compensation for a nominally precarious but practically permanent tenure. Tenants-at-will labour under the delusion that they can keep their position and their profits or losses from the calculations of the landlord's agent—an ostrich-like delusion, but very firmly fixed.

For all these reasons the farmer has hitherto displayed a rooted aversion to anything like agricultural statistics, and has successfully resisted attempts, even endorsed by noblemen considered "farmers' friends," to collect the sort of agricultural information which is furnished annually to the governments of the United States and of the Australian colonies, as well as to all the governments of continental Europe.

Thus, when cattle were dying off at the rate of some thousands a week, we positively did not know, within a couple of millions, more or less, how many cattle, sheep, and pigs there were for the British meat-eater to fall back on when the foreign trade in live cattle was entirely stopped—that foreign cattle trade which in 1864 brought us as many animals as have since perished by the plague.

One indirect result of the cattle-plague was to obtain official, although non-compulsory, returns of the numbers of horned stock, sheep, and pigs in Great Britain; Ireland having for several years been the subject of an annual statistical inquiry. The English tables are now before us. They are not very satisfactory, for the inquiries were conducted by the officers of the inland revenue, and it is amongst the traditions of that office to afford no more information than the law requires.

Nothing, therefore, is given but the bare figures of the return, which are thrown, as though grudgingly, before the public, like the pieces of a child's puzzle, to be put together as we can. We are not told how many schedules were distributed, how many defaulters there were, or the number of owners, or the estimate of stock unreturned. Neither are we informed of what is equally important—the particulars of the breed of the stock, and whether they were stores or fat stock. In some counties lambs were embodied with sheep; other returns in the colder counties were made before the lambs were yeaned; but intelligible notes for the useful reading of the naked statistics do not appear.

The number of cattle before the outbreak of the rinderpest in Great Britain, excluding Ireland and the islands, has been estimated at nearly five millions. The return falls short of that number by some six thousand; but this first voluntary census may be wrong by that number either way. The rinderpest, up to October, 1866, had by the plague or the poleaxe destroyed over two hundred thousand head, or something like five per cent of the average stock—a serious loss, not easily to be replaced, especially under the restrictions which have become indispensable to guard the country against a second introduction of the disease. The sheep of 1866 were counted at over twenty-two millions, and the pigs at two millions and a half. Sheep, although not absolutely free from rinderpest, suffered to the extent of less than eight thousand.

We have not included the live stock of Ireland in these figures, because the sea-passage that divides the green island from England makes the importation just as difficult as from Holland and North Germany, and more difficult than from the Channel ports of France. But Ireland, although still under-stocked for want of capital and confidence amongst graziers, makes a very respectable display in the statistical tables. The cattle amount to three millions and a half (we throughout quote round numbers); the sheep are only a very little more numerous than the cattle; and the pigs reach one million three hundred thousand.

A writer in the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society has given us the area in acres and the population of the principal

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continental states and of the United States, and shows the proportion of live stock of each kind to each hundred acres of area and each hundred of population. According to these tables, Holland and Belgium—butter and cheese exporting countries—stand highest in proportionate number of cattle to acreage, but rather low in the proportion of their total stock to the number of their population—Belgium being, as compared with the United Kingdom, as fifty to one hundred and thirty, our inferior number of cattle being made up by the superior number of sheep. On these tables Professor Rogers, of Oxford, has constructed a theory that the number of live stock in Great Britain is decreasing, in consequence of the tendency of small farms to be amalgamated into large ones. All existing evidence is opposed to this theory, and is in favour of the assumption that there is a steady increase in the quantity of live meat produced on every acre of land occupied for farming and grazing in the three kingdoms—more especially in Scotland and England, the countries of large farms. Indeed, a very little consideration will show that the naked figures of these comparative tables give the least possible information of any useful kind. Thus Ireland, from its moist climate, is essentially a grass country; indeed, it is now often called "the natural home of the short-horn," the most profitable meat-producing breed in the world. Within the recollection of middle-aged men of the present generation, the cattle of Ireland were of the unprofitable, slow-growing, long-horned, thick-skinned breed. These have been superseded, on nearly all but high mountain ranges and the poorest wastes, by the short-horn and its crosses. In nearly all the grazing counties of Ireland, for the last twenty years, the long-horns were year after year turned into oxen and exported, the breeders resorting to imported short-horn bulls only. The steady sale of lean stock to English graziers assisted the change. The consequence is, that not only is Ireland stocked with the modern breed, but it has become the country on which English graziers chiefly rely for the young stock, technically stores, which they grow into beef.

Now, if we were to judge only from figures, we should decide that Ireland was better supplied with live stock than Scotland, and was even better farmed, while the exact reverse is the fact. Scotland has very little beef-feeding pasture as compared with Ireland—although Scotch turnips are the very best in the world—but what she has is grazed by the choicest beef-makers. All her good land is well stocked; but an enormous per-centage of the acreage of Scotland is irreclaimable waste. The primest joints of metropolitan markets are of Scotch beef. Valleys, and moorland, and mountain-tops, that formerly fed such half-starved wild cattle as Rob Roy "lifted," are now more profitably given up to sheep, Cheviots and Blackfaces, both migrants from England. Again, since easy conveyance and good markets, with the spread of root-cultivation, have led the Scotch to fatten a great number of their beeves at home on turnips, English graziers have been obliged to look more to Ireland for their supply of store-cattle, horned manure makers, and consumers of root-crops; while, until the outbreak of the rinderpest, not only did the dairies of the metropolis depend largely on Holland for milch cows, but Norfolk and other feeding counties began to draw "stores" from the Continent. On the other hand, neither the climate nor the genius of the Irish people is so well suited to the growth of sheep, although there is no doubt that whenever Ireland becomes really tranquil, the number of the long-woolled sheep—than which no animal is more profitable—suited to the climate will be largely increased. The peasant-farmers of Ireland contribute next to nothing to the stock of beef-producing animals, and nothing to that of mutton. The export to England is drawn from the great farms of the grazing districts.

The comparisons of the number of cattle and sheep in Great Britain and in France or Germany are, to say the least, very unprofitable, because the first elements of comparison are wanting. It is like the early Japanese trade of exchanging gold for silver by weight. In France, for instance, in 1862, there were nearly six million cows and eight million of other cattle, fourteen millions in all, for a population of thirty-seven millions, while Great Britain, with not quite five million cattle, had a population of over twenty-three millions to feed. Yet meat (much more largely eaten by the English than by the French) is not dearer in England than in France, where the best cuts of horseflesh fetch fivepence a pound. The reason of this great power of meat consumption in Great Britain is to be found in the fact that we grow meat, while in France and Germany, with the exception of limited areas which grow beef for England and Paris, they allow skin, bone, meat, and muscle to exist for the purposes of the dairy or harness, or both combined.

It may be assumed that every head of horned stock included in our statistical returns is either a dairy cow or a beef-making animal, and that on an average it produces twice as much of the best joints of beef as the French animal, because it comes to the butcher at half the age, and fattened, thanks to root and cake, on one-fourth of the area. Normandy and Brittany have recently sent us a few short-horn crosses, equal to those from Warwickshire or Yorkshire. The balance in weight and quality of British sheep and pigs, taking early maturity into consideration, is still greater. We have no doubt that the ordinary cultivated acreage of England and Scotland produces four times as much beef, mutton, and pork, annually, as the same acreage in France or Germany, excepting always the exceptionally well cultivated farms in Prussia, equal to and exceeding in extent our greatest West Norfolk farms.

We have it on the high authority of M. Le Play, the chief commissioner of the French Exhibition, that the efforts of the French go-

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vernment, carried out most judiciously for more than forty years, to improve the meat-making live stock of France, have proved, as far as the peasant proprietor is concerned, of no more effect than "water poured on sand." The peasant-proprietor cannot afford to buy, nor to feed, nor to use a beef-making beast: he wants muscle, not flesh. As for sheep, he has neither the space for a crop of roots, nor the money nor the inclination to find the essential corn or cake for winter food.

But although, in the absence of complete agricultural statistics, all the evidence is in favour of a great increase in the meat-producing powers of this country, founded on the increased use of artificial manures, still the fact remains that the supply is not equal to the demand created by increased population, and still more by the improved condition of a population that expects to eat fresh meat where their fathers, more poorly clad, were compelled to be contented with a little bacon, or a little of the salted beef of a worn-out dairy cow. We are constantly, so far as London and the great towns of England are concerned, largely dependent on the foreigner. Our first foreign supply was drawn from Northern Europe, from parts of Denmark, from Germany, and from Holland. Spain and Portugal sent and send us a limited number of fat bullocks, magnificent animals, dove-coloured, meek-eyed, with enormous branching horns—chiefly working bullocks, fatted on Indian corn, producing "meat mottled like marble, and nearly as hard," cheap, nutritious, and tough, but of great value for soup and stews, if only our labourers' wives knew how to cook.

About two years ago the French began to ship a number of their best oxen to us, chiefly Normands crossed with short-horns. The year before the cattle-plague one English cattle-salesman remitted ten thousand pounds to France, the purchase-money of fat bullocks for one season. Sheep came to us from Germany and Holstein in enormously increasing numbers; many merinoes, which furnish a large quantity of small tough joints at a very low price. The North German exporters, whose centre is Hamburg, send thousands of excellent animals called Dutch sheep, which are crosses from good English Leicester and Cotswold rams. Flocks of pure and of crosses of Downs are also kept in the large towns in sandy Prussia. It not unfrequently happens that one-third of the live stock exhibited in the metropolitan market is foreign. At the time the cattle-plague broke out, railways having been opened up to Eastern Europe, we had tapped the grassy plains of Poland and Hungary, and had even one importation from Russia. Our salesmen were in communication with the cattle-dealers at Berlin and Vienna, and the grey cattle with straight long horns, which are supposed to be the descendants of Oriental cattle brought by the first Tartar invasion into Europe, were to be seen in the streets of London. These were no doubt, directly or indirectly, the cause of all our woes.

Of the foreign cattle trade, we may say, paraphrasing a line of one of Horace's most celebrated odes, "We can neither live with it, nor without it." All the evidence, British and foreign, practical and scientific, of Germany, of veterinaries, and of English sufferers, points to one short, simple, certain, severe, and somewhat costly remedy—a market exclusively reserved for foreign fat cattle at every port of debarkation, where every animal intended for the butcher should be slain, after sale, in public abattoirs provided for the purpose; and a quarantine-ground, with ample grass lairs for dairy cows and stores, to be retained for not less than fourteen days after landing. This is the opinion of the commissioners, who minutely investigated the whole subject, and to this solution public opinion is rapidly tending. It must be admitted that such an arrangement would add something to the price of every foreign beast, and be very unpopular with butchers. The most advantageous way in which cattle can be disposed of for beef, if there were no such thing as an infectious disease, is, that they should be sold in a convenient open market, taken home by the butcher, killed as near his shop as possible (when wanted, and not before) in a well-constructed slaughter-house, so that being able to make the very best price of the hide, horns, blood, fat, and other uneatable offal, and to cool the meat in the best manner, he may lose as little as possible, and may therefore be able to bring down the average price of every pound of meat.

But some tax must be paid by the butcher first, and his customers the public afterwards, to ensure us against the recurrence of a calamity that has already cost us three million sterling in stock destroyed, besides the resulting increased price of meat. A foreign cattle market in London would encroach on the monopoly of the Corporation and its single market—it would give trouble to the live-stock salesman by making another market-day—it would interfere with the monopoly of the dead-meat salesman of Newgate and Leadenhall markets, and it would somewhat affect the profitable disposal of the eatable offal, from which, when retailed at the butchers' shops, the poorer classes of the metropolis get a large supply of cheap and wholesome food. But great evils require severe remedies. Therefore, and very soon, on the Thames and on the Humber a foreign live-cattle market must be established, as far as possible from the market for British live stock. Thus the home trade will be made free, and the importation of live foreign stock, bringing their valuable hides, blood, fat, and offal for the employment and food of the labourers of London, will be encouraged.

But cattle-market reform must not stop here. The metropolis, with its three millions of inhabitants, is, for all the purposes of supply, not one, but several towns. A single central dead meat market is a mistake. We need at least three new meat markets, one on the north-west, to be fed by the northern and western railways with

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dead meat, fish, and poultry; one in the east—and, thanks to the munificent enterprise of Miss Burdett Coutts, this want is being supplied by the finest market, architecturally, in London—to supply the population crowded in and around Bethnal-green, the docks, and along the river, which might be the foreign market; and one on the south side. Doubtless the howl of vested interests in scarlet and blue gowns, and blue and greasy aprons, will long prevail against a reform so much needed.

We have thought it not inappropriate to devote the above space to the meat question, with reference to the sixty-ninth annual show of cattle, sheep, and pigs by the Smithfield Club. In the spacious avenues of the Agricultural Hall the curious or serious student of useful knowledge may with comparative comfort make himself acquainted with the best specimens of the various breeds of beef and mutton making farm-stock, specimens which are the result of more than a century of careful selection and industrious experiment in the art of feeding. But although the progress in increasing the number of good animals in each breed is enormous, it must not be concluded that there is any improvement in the quality of the best meat. There is *more* good meat; but the best of to-day is not better than the best seventy years ago.

The Smithfield Club, strictly conservative, like all agricultural institutions, makes the Devon cattle No. 1 in its catalogue, because, seventy years ago, the then Duke of Bedford (namely, the famous agriculturist, fox-hunter, and friend of Charles Fox) founded the society by showing three extraordinary Devons, and gave two hundred and fifty pounds in cash, besides the chance of silver cups and gold medals, to encourage the breed. Admirable are the modern specimens exhibited, for quality, although often absurdly small. Cattle judges are somewhat Della Cruscan in their tastes and decisions, and are apt to please the eye at the expense of the consumer. But the prizes do not spread the breed of Devons much beyond the borders of the native county and Somersetshire. In Norfolk, where they first obtained an ex-county reputation, they do not thrive without continued crosses from the moist pastures of the district to which they owe their name. The Devon makes English roast beef second to none; and it may safely be asserted that all our cake, and corn, and roots, do not produce better beef than that of the grass, and corn, and hay fed oxen sent from Woburn in 1786.

The Hereford, with its red hide and white face, follows the Devon—a fine ox, and, like the Devon, good at the plough, but not a favourite with the butcher, because he always looks, outside at least, as good as he is inside, when dead—often better. He is rarely to be found out of the two or three counties close to his native place; he is a beast that demands good pastures, and has found a home and favour in Australia and the grassy regions of the United States. The prizes for him are the same as for the Devon. Thirdly comes the Short-horn, without possibility of question, unless by some benighted one from Devon or Hereford, the undisputed chief and king of the cattle tribe. He alone flourishes in every temperate and even in semi-tropical regions of the globe. He is to be found in perfection from Cornwall to John o'Groat's, and has carried improvement to the remote Orcadian and Shetland islands. He is the true originator of meat for the million, good to make beef wherever fat is appreciated—good in the dairy even in pure strains when well selected—of not much use in harness, but sure to produce a good beef-making and a good dairy animal in any cross. Even Scotland, with its admirable breed of black cattle, has been compelled to give up its traditionary prejudices. It has adopted pure Short-horns in the Lowlands, and has crossed the black-polled in the Highlands with the Southron beast.

The short-horn was scarcely known out of the North of England when the Smithfield Club was started. It was long neglected, and has never been more favoured in the prizes offered than the aboriginal Devons and Herefords. But for many years it has only been by exception that the principal prizes, especially for cows, have not gone to short-horns or short-horn crosses. Here, again, nature beats art; for while the short-horn gives meat for the million, the ancient upland breeds—the Devon, the Scot, the Welshman—preserve their claims to the preference of the gourmet. The once-famous Irish black and brindled cattle have been so far superseded by the short-horn, that at the Agricultural Hall they are only to be found in twos or threes, competing for as many prizes.

Highland Scots, those shaggy, long-horned, picturesque beasts, which form the greatest ornament of a gentleman's park, beside or after deer, and Scotch polled, provide the very choicest beef in the London market, standing even before the Devons; yet they make in numbers very poor show in the Smithfield Club, while in the metropolitan market they hold the place of honour, and fetch the top price. Store Scots are becoming scarce; the Scotch farmers feed at home, and prefer the profits of the market to the honours of the show. It must, however, be remarked, in passing, that it is now so common a practice to cross the black-polled with the short-horn, that every gigantic-polled beast is, justly or unjustly, suspected of a short-horn strain. After the pure-bred come the cross-bred classes, which generally exceed the pure in weight.

Sheep follow cattle in the catalogue, and surround them in the show. To follow them in detail would take more space than we can spare. Here, again, quality has to give way to quantity. The four-year-old sheep of our fathers is as rare as the roc's egg of the Arabian Nights. All the prizes are given for sheep under two years old, except in the wild mountain breeds. Leicesters, Cotswolds, Lincolns, and Romney

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Marsh, all invaluable animals in their way, as growers of wool and makers of early mature fat mutton, priceless as crosses, we are content to leave to the woolstapler and tallow-chandler. The Downs, whether of Sussex, Hampshire, or Shropshire origin, we should select in preference, as meat, from native uplands, and not from the counties where they are pampered on roots, oil-cake, nut-cake, cotton-cake, and pulse; but, for choice, give us the despised but well-fed mountaineer. Last winter, a plump three-year-old Herdwick wether, from the mountains of Cumberland, that no Smithfield Club judge would have looked at twice, formed one of the glories of two great Christmas dinners, where guests were present who had dined at the best tables in Europe.

Taken for all in all, perhaps the pure Down, suffered to reach three years, and properly fed, makes as good mutton as any; but the black-faced Scotchman, who has migrated to an English park one year before his death, runs him very hard. In a word, on mountains and uplands only is first-rate mutton bred; but good agriculture must come in for the feeding.

A word about the butcher, and the price exacted for meat, must be reserved for a future occasion.

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE GREAT STOCK EXCHANGE HOAX.

On a January evening in 1814, Lord Cochrane, who had just been appointed flag-captain to the Tonnant, a line-of-battle ship carrying the pennant of his uncle, Admiral Sir Alexander Cochrane, and bound to the North American station, was dining with Mr. Cochrane Johnston, another relative of his. At the quiet farewell party there was also present Captain De Berenger, a dashing foreign adventurer, who had held a commission in the Duke of Cumberland's sharpshooters; and whom both the admiral and his brother regarded as an accomplished man—a little pinched for money; but, in spite of his neediness, a gallant officer, skilful as a contriver of warlike projectiles, and a first-class musketry instructor. This needy gentleman, of what nationality was not very clear, had wheedled himself into the good graces of the frank sailors: it had probably been arranged that he should meet the newly appointed flag-captain, and obtain interest to press his claims upon the Admiralty, which had hitherto steadily refused to let him accompany Sir Alexander. There was no time to lose, for the shipwright was knocking the last trenails into the side of the Tonnant, and her rigging was all but up. The admiral had gone on already, as the war with America was still raging, with no immediate probability of peace. De Berenger made great play at the hero of Basque roads. He tried him with various baits; talked war, and invention, and fire-ships, and rifles; aired all his accomplishments, and displayed a chivalrous eagerness for active service, which enlisted Lord Cochrane's sympathies. Towards the end of the evening, he attempted a coup de main; for he asked Lord Cochrane to step aside for some private conversation. He solicited Lord Cochrane to take him with him in the Tonnant, in any capacity whatever. He had given up all hope of the Admiralty permitting his being engaged, but he would take his chance of the admiral's finding him employment at the station. He handed to Cochrane, as credentials, testimonials of the way in which he had performed the duties of adjutant to the Duke of Cumberland's riflemen, and others of a like character. They were all laudatory and satisfactory. Cochrane politely expressed his regret that he could not possibly take him, unless the Admiralty sanctioned it; adding kindly that he would very gladly have consented to solicit the Admiralty to reverse their decision, but for the fact that he, of all living men, had the least influence with them, and that his interference would certainly put De Berenger in a position worse than before. For some weeks after, Cochrane heard no more of De Berenger.

In the mean time, things were getting worse and worse with Captain De Berenger. Threadbare dandies and needy projectors were his chief associates. To them he sometimes darkly hinted at a plan by which thousands of pounds were soon to be thrown by him into the hands of those distinguished friends of his of whom he talked so much—Lord Cochrane and Mr. Cochrane Johnstone, on the latter of whom he called daily. He had a plan for building a new Ranelagh behind Allsop's-buildings; perhaps that might be the scheme he meant? The Hon. Alexander Murray, a gentleman who became very soon afterwards an eminent racket-player in the King's Bench, winked at this; but De Berenger shook his head, smiled, and said it was something far better than that. So the friends of De Berenger merely pulled up their somewhat soiled shirt-collars, and slapped their boots with their sticks, quite confident that the artful captain knew remarkably well what he was about.

The scene now changes. About daybreak of the 21st of February there was a loud knocking and a calling for lights at the door of the Ship Inn at Dover; a clamour almost as startling as the ominous knocking at the south entry that struck such terror to Macbeth. It must be some traveller of enormous importance—runaway king or government courier with despatches about Napoleon. The noise so roused Mr. Marsh, who kept the Packet-Boat opposite, that he ran across to help the Ship, and ordered the waiter to follow with two candles. There, in the passage of the Ship, stood a tall, dark, military-looking man, in a grey great-coat, with a scarlet uniform gleaming beneath it, and on the breast of the uniform a resplendent star, with some order hanging from it. He was in a restless fever of excitement, and wanted a post-chaise at once; but, before that, a swift horse to carry an express to Admiral Foley, the port-admiral at Deal. The coup de grace had been struck at last; this officer had

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brought news of Bonaparte's being killed (some said, positively, broiled and eaten) by the Cossacks, of the restoration of the Bourbons, and of the taking of Paris by the allies. He had just landed on the beach; and this much he allowed to transpire, that he bore most important despatches—more important, indeed, than had been received in this country for twenty years.

Mr. Wright, the landlord of the Ship, was then called into the room of the mysterious stranger, round whose door a crowd of admiring persons were whispering, their faces full of wonder and curiosity. The officer removing his German cap with the pale gold band round it, required paper, pens, and ink directly, in order to write to the port-admiral. He wrote in the coffee-room, now full of the roused inmates of the hotel, while the chaise and four was getting ready.

Presently, Admiral Foley got the glorious news, spread it in a fresh circle, and forwarded it at once to Mr. Croker, at the Admiralty, it being too hazy to telegraph. In the mean time, off dashed the officer in the grey coat to Canterbury, and from there to Sittingbourne, feeing every postilion with a napoleon. From the Rose, at Sittingbourne, to the Crown, at Rochester, on rolled the fiery wheels for the Granby, at Dartford. As they went, they sowed, as it were, wonder and delight; for was not Bonaparte dead at last, and the great war over with a thunder-stroke?

The postilions were first ordered to drive to the Mansion House, to tell the Lord Mayor; but when in Cheapside, it suddenly occurred to the mysterious officer—De Bourg, as he called himself—that the ministers would be offended if he did not see them first. So he turned the horses to Downing-street; but eventually paid off the chaise, and got out and walked, to get there quicker.

Two other couriers, with the same important news, had, singularly enough, arrived at Northfleet on the Monday morning in a six-oared cutter. They instantly ordered a post-chaise for London. These gentlemen assumed an air of historical importance, and they wore white Bourbon cockades in their large cocked-hats, to show that they brought startling news. They had, it appeared, been in an open boat in the Channel all night, and were haggard and fatigued. This was about eight o'clock, and they ordered an instant post-chaise for Westminster. When they got to Shooter's-hill, the postboy on the leader was told not to distress the horses up the hill, but to rattle on well afterwards. The gates were three shillings. One of the gentlemen, reckless with excitement, gave the boys twelve shillings each for driving. The horses, for the last few stages, had been embowered in laurel-boughs. The route was to be over London-bridge, down Lombard-street, over Blackfriars-bridge, and down the New-cut. When in sight of the Marsh-gate, the postilions were ordered to stop. The two gentlemen then got out, tied up their military cocked-hats in pocket-handkerchiefs, put on round ones, and walked away. This was about eleven, and the mysterious strangers appeared no more above the horizon. But soon up went the funds, as quick as the mercury when you put a lighted candle near the bulb. Up, up, up! there was no stopping them; they went soaring like balloons.

That very day the mysterious officer drove to Lord Cochrane's in a hackney-coach; but Lord Cochrane had gone to the City—to a manufactory, to watch the progress of a new sort of naval signal-lamp he had just patented. The flag-captain was all but ready to start for his ship, and his valet was at that moment busy selecting his master's clothes from the wardrobe. A short time afterwards, a servant brought a note to Lord Cochrane, at the manufactory, so illegibly written, either from excitement or from haste, that the name of the writer could not be deciphered. It came, the man said, from a military officer who had called, and who was waiting Lord Cochrane's return. Lord Cochrane, fearing it might be a messenger from the Peninsula, with tidings of his younger brother, who was serving there under Wellington, and was dangerously ill, hurried home, and, to his surprise, found the writer of the note was De Berenger. He appeared uneasy and agitated, shabby and hopeless. Poverty had taken from him much of the self-respect of a gentleman. He was no longer the embarrassed officer pressing a claim. He was now a mendicant, crying for bread. He stated that he was environed by serious embarrassments, and that his last hope would fail if he were not permitted to accompany Lord Cochrane. He had kept his lodgings so as to be ready to join the ship at once, if he were successful in this final appeal. Cochrane felt much distressed to behold a gentleman, of whose military talents he had so high an opinion, in so pitiable a position. He told him he would do anything he could to assist him, but that he could not possibly take him on board the Tonnant. De Berenger again and again passionately renewed his request. When he found that it was hopeless, he professed to be almost mad with despair; for he said he had called on Lord Cochrane, making sure his services would be accepted, and that he should be allowed to join the Tonnant at once. Lord Cochrane repeated to him that if any of De Berenger's own friends succeeded in influencing the Admiralty in his favour, and if he procured their sanction in time to join the Tonnant at Portsmouth (it sailed from Chatham), he would take him on board. De Berenger pretended to clutch at this last chance, but stated that he could not call on Lord Yarmouth in his military uniform, or appear in public so dressed; for he was a prisoner in the Rules of the King's Bench, and might be recognised if clad so conspicuously. He said he must use a great liberty, and begged Cochrane to lend him a civilian's hat. He had a great-coat over his uniform. Cochrane gave him the hat, and he wrapped up his own in a towel. Cochrane saw that his uniform could

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be seen under his great-coat, so he offered him a great-coat of his own, little knowing what construction would afterwards be put upon his free kind-heartedness. Meanwhile, Cochrane went down to Chatham. In a day or two it transpired that the intelligence of the mysterious officer who had landed at Dover was false. The committee of the Stock Exchange at once took measures to bring the concoctors of the falsehood to justice, and offered a reward of two hundred and fifty guineas for the discovery of De Bourg.

It was already evident that the sham courier who had given this name was a cheat and swindler, evidently the agent of some conspirators, who had wished to profit by a sudden rise in government stocks, which had already risen like a mountain wave, and gone down like a burnt-out rocket.

The head rascal was hotly pursued, and a clue soon found. A man named Crane, driving hackney-coach No. 890, was discovered, who, on the morning in question, took up De Bourg at Lambeth Marsh gate, where he got out of the post-chaise. He did not drive either to the Admiralty or the War Office, but straight to No. 13, Green-street. He got out there, returned with a small leathern portmanteau, and gave the driver five shillings. Part of the uniform was hauled up from the Thames by the fishermen, one day in March. It was tied up in an old chair-cover, and had been sunk with three pieces of lead, some stones, and a lump of coal. Besides the clothes, there was some embroidery and a broken star. The other links were soon found, for Mr. Solomon, military accoutrement maker at Charing-cross, identified the uniform. It had been purchased by a man with whiskers on the 19th of February—great-coat, fur foraging cap with pale gold band, and staff-officer's scarlet coat, with star. The man with whiskers said the dress was wanted for private theatricals; and what pleased Mr. Solomon was, that he did not try to beat down the price.

De Bourg was hard to catch; but one of his accomplices was soon struck upon, a Mr. Vinn, an accountant, who had many rather suspicious friends among needy and shifty gentlemen. On the 14th of February, receiving a note from a man he knew, named M'Rae, who lived in Fetter-lane, he went the next day, by appointment, to meet him at the Caroline Coffee-house. M'Rae told him that there was now an opportunity for him to make his fortune. By travelling abroad? No; but by travelling at home. M'Rae said there was a scheme in contemplation by men of affluence and consequence, and he thought no one was more fit to be employed than Vinn. On asking him if there was nothing of moral turpitude in it, M'Rae answered there was none: it was a scheme practised daily by men of the first consequence. It was nothing more nor less than biting the biters, or, in other words, a hoax on the Stock Exchange. On Vinn asking which way it was to be performed, M'Rae said it was by going down to Dartford, Folkstone, or Dover, as he might receive instructions; but it was necessary for himself and his accomplice to get two naval officers' dresses.

Vinn was to be recompensed at once, and then to have his fortune made. Here Vinn grew indignant, and said he would as soon share in a highway robbery; he really thought M'Rae had known him better; and, in his virtuous indignation, he began to talk very loud. M'Rae quieted him, and cried, "Hush!" They then walked up Cornhill, where they parted. But Vinn's virtue somewhat melting (he thought as informer he might net something), he returned, and proposed to introduce M'Rae to a suitable man at the Jamaica Coffee-house. M'Rae assented, but, at the door, grew cautious, and would not venture in; he then asked how "Long live Louis the Eighteenth," and "Long live the Bourbons," was expressed in French, and Vinn obligingly told him. He saw his way better now. The real fact was, the artful Vinn was trying to get another witness to the affair, for he instantly went and communicated with a friend at the Atlas printing office, and with thirteen other friends at an adjacent coffee-house.

On Sunday, the 20th of February, M'Rae came to his lodgings, with two dark blue coats and two opera-hats in a bundle. One hat had a brass plate and a gold tassel; this he put on, and asked Mrs. Alexander, a fellow-lodger, if she thought he looked like an officer; Mrs. Alexander pronounced emphatically that he did. He had some white ribbon with him, which he ordered his wife to make up into two round cockades, as he was going to take in the flats, and must be at Gravesend by a quarter before two. He then left, anxious and excited, with his bundle. The next day Mrs. Alexander met M'Rae, with his bundle, in Cursitor-street, and he requested her to go to a cook-shop and get him a dinner. He told her he had been sleeping at Northfleet, but he looked as if he had been up all night. The white cockade, and the paper on which it was pricked, were burnt, the white lining was taken out of the coat, and the coat sent to the dyer. Before this night journey, M'Rae had been so poor that he, his wife, and Mrs. Alexander had only had one fire between them; but after this he flourished about one-pound notes, and boasted that he had made fifty pounds by the job.

Two men, named Holloway and Knight, were next ferreted out. They owned to the Stock Exchange committee that they had joined in the scheme. Knight had been employed by M'Rae, at Holloway's solicitation. Knight, a man named Sandon, and M'Rae, had come in the post-chaise from Dartford. Holloway seemed frightened at the serious turn things had taken.

De Bourg, of course, proved to be De Berenger. He lodged with a man named Davidson in Asylum-buildings. He had not dined at home on the Sunday, and he did not come home

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till Monday evening. Davidson noticed that when he left on the Monday he had a new great-coat on.

But long before all this scoundrelism could be brought to light, a rumour had got about that the pretended De Bourg had been proved on the 21st of February to have visited Lord Cochrane in Green-street, in his sham dress, and fresh from the successful trick. "At this time," says Lord Cochrane, "I had joined the Tonnant at Chatham, and was preparing to sail for the South American station; but on learning the injurious report, and being, moreover, indignant that the perpetrator of the deception should have dared to visit me, I determined to denounce him, in order that, if he were really the guilty person, his name should be made public at the earliest possible moment, so that no time should be lost in bringing the matter home to him. In pursuance of this determination, I obtained leave of absence from the ship. On my return to town, I found that, though the authorities were ignorant of the name of the person who came to my house on the 21st of February, public rumour did not hesitate to impute to me complicity in his transactions. I immediately consulted my legal advisers. The result was, that an affidavit was prepared, and submitted to an eminent barrister, Mr. Gurney, to whom I disclosed every particular relative to the visit of De Berenger, as well as to my own previous, though very unimportant, transactions in the public funds. I was advised by him and my own solicitors to confine myself simply to supplying the authorities with the name of De Berenger, as the person seen at my house in uniform on the 21st ultimo."

Lord Cochrane, a man of a fiery nature, of severe honour, and of the most heroic courage, scarcely knew how to strike the deadliest blow at these mere vaporous rumours, so invisible yet so poisonous. He at once drew up a minute affidavit of how his time had been spent on the fatal day, and disclosed the name of De Berenger. The Tories, eager to impugn the honour of so bitter an opponent, fell on him like flesh-flies on a galled blood-horse. Castlereagh, always small and malignant, remembered too well the Westminster meetings, and the daring conduct of Lord Cochrane upon Burdett's committal to the Tower. The Tories were eager to fly at his throat, and now there was a chance. Lord Cochrane was held answerable, with the others, for the fraud. The trial came on at the Court of King's Bench on June 8, 1814.

Mr. Adolphus (Mr. Gurney's junior) opened the pleadings on the part of the prosecution, from which it appeared that this was an indictment charging the different defendants, Random De Berenger, the Honourable Sir Thomas Cochrane (commonly called Lord Cochrane), the Honourable Andrew Cochrane Johnston, Richard Gathorn Butt, Ralph Sandon, Alexander M'Rae, John Peter Holloway, and Henry Lyle, with conspiring, in a variety of different counts, by the raising of false reports, to raise the funds to a higher price than they would otherwise have borne, to the injury of the public, and to the benefit of the conspirators. To these various charges the defendants pleaded "Not guilty."

Mr. Joseph Fearne, stockbroker, of 5, Shorter's-court, close to the side door of the Stock Exchange, deposed that Mr. Butt, Lord Cochrane, and Mr. Cochrane Johnston, had all rooms in the same house. He was introduced to the two last gentlemen by Mr. Butt, and was employed by them to make purchases in the funds. He frequently saw them all three together, and Lord Cochrane recognised Mr. Butt's orders. From the 12th to the 19th, witness made various purchases and sales for all three. On the evening of the 19th, Lord Cochrane's balance, in omnium alone, amounted to a hundred and thirty-nine thousand pounds in his favour; Mr. Cochrane Johnston's omnium amounted to about a hundred and twenty thousand pounds, and his consols account was that day about a hundred thousand pounds; Mr. Butt's omnium, he believed, was one hundred and fifty-four thousand pounds, and his consols one hundred and sixty-eight thousand pounds. On the morning of the 21st of February, he sold them all, both omnium and consols. On that day he saw Mr. Butt and Mr. Cochrane Johnston about ten. About eleven the news came. He sold omnium first at 26½, and last at 30¼. Consols rose from 70⅝ to 72½. About two o'clock the funds fell again, as the report was disbelieved. All three had bought and sold to an enormous amount ever since November. He was told to sell out whenever he could get one per cent for their stock. He often sold twenty thousand pounds and thirty thousand pounds' worth of stock at a time.

Several stockbrokers deposed to Mr. Butt and Mr. Cochrane Johnston making large purchases a few days before the hoax, and on the Monday selling to great advantage. Fifty-four one-pound notes, found in the desk of De Berenger when seized at Leith, formed part payment of a cheque of Lord Cochrane, and had passed through the hands of Mr. Cochrane Johnston. A Mr. Le Marchant deposed that he was acquainted with Captain De Berenger, who had stated to him that he was about to go to America with Lord Cochrane. The witness asked him how he could do that under his existing embarrassments? De Berenger explained (about the 14th of February) that he had put Lord Cochrane upon a scheme of raising large sums of money by the funds, and that Lord Cochrane had a private purse for his (De Berenger's) use. This purse was composed of a certain per-centage on the money which his lordship made by De Berenger's suggestions regarding the stocks. (All this, probably, applied to Mr. Cochrane Johnston.)

Mr. Serjeant Best and Mr. Serjeant Pell addressed the court on behalf of the defendants; and Mr. Brougham called Lord Melville and Colonel Torrens to prove Sir A. Cochrane's exertions for De Berenger, whom

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he wished to take out as inquirer (spy), and to help to raise a company of sharpshooters in America.

Mr. Tabourden, solicitor to De Berenger, proved that, in 1813, Mr. Cochrane Johnston had employed their client to lay out some ground near Paddington as a sort of Ranelagh, and had advanced him money for writing a prospectus and preparing plans. It was also proved that Mr. Cochrane Johnston had at last offered two hundred and fifty pounds as a fair consideration, and had promised a loan of two hundred pounds more. Fifty pounds had been paid on account. The witness believed in De Berenger's strict honour: he had lent him three thousand pounds, and had been surety for him in the Rules, from which he had escaped.

Lord Ellenborough's summing up was harsh and unfair. From the beginning he did his best to bias the jury against his political opponent, and left no stone unturned to secure a verdict of guilty. He dwelt especially on the fact that the coachman who drove De Berenger to Lord Cochrane's swore to his wearing a scarlet uniform, while Lord Cochrane declared in his affidavit that he came in a green sharpshooter's uniform. This, he considered, proved that Lord Cochrane—as a sharer in the fraud—had lent him a change of dress. The real fact was that De Berenger pulled down the blinds of the coach, and he then changed his red coat for the green one he carried in his portmanteau—the same coat in which he had travelled to Dover.

The gross injustice of the Tory judge is best seen from the following passage of his summing up:

"Now, gentleman," he said, "he (De Berenger) is brought to the house of Lord Cochrane; further evidence afterwards arises of his being there. We will at present follow the dress to its conclusion. George Odell, a fisherman, says, 'In the month of March, just above Old Swan Stairs, off against the iron wharfs, when I was dredging for coals, I picked up a bundle which was tied with either a piece of chimney line or window line in the cover of a chair bottom; there were two slips of a coat, embroidery, a star, and a piece of silver with two figures upon it; it had been sunk with two pieces of lead and some bits of coal. I gave that which I found to Mr. Wade, the secretary of the Stock Exchange. It was picked up on the Wednesday, and carried there on the Saturday. I picked this up on the 20th March.' You have before had the animal hunted down, and now you have his skin, found and produced as it was taken out of the river, cut to pieces. The sinking it, could have been with no other view than that of suppressing this piece of evidence, and preventing the discovery which it might otherwise occasion. This makes it the more material to attend to the stripping off the clothes which took place in Lord Cochrane's house. . . . . De Berenger must have had that dress with him, whatever it was, in which he had come in the coach, and it does not appear that he had any means of shifting himself. If he had on an aide-de-camp's uniform with a star, and so presented himself to Lord Cochrane, how could Lord Cochrane reconcile it to the duties he owed to society, to government, and to his character as a gentleman, to give him the means of exchanging it? It must be put on for some dishonest purpose. It is for you, gentlemen, to say whether it is possible that he should not know that a man coming so disguised and so habited—if he appeared before him so habited—came upon some dishonest errand, and whether it is to be conceived a person should so present himself to a person who did not know what that dishonest errand was, and that it was the very dishonest errand upon which he had so recently been engaged, and which he is found to be executing, in the spreading of false intelligence for the purpose of elevating the funds. If he actually appeared to Lord Cochrane stripped of his coat, and with that red aide-de-camp's uniform, star, and order, which have been represented to you, he appeared before him rather in the habit of a mountebank than in his proper uniform of a sharpshooter. This seems wholly inconsistent with the conduct of an innocent and honest man; for if he appeared in such a habit, he must have appeared to any rational person fully blazoned in the costume of that or some other crime."

Who can wonder, after this, that a prosecution, urged on by the Admiralty, conducted by both private and public enemies, and pressed forward by the Stock Exchange committee, blind mad at their recent losses, ended in a conviction? Lord Cochrane, the frank, reckless hero of many battles, was found guilty, fined a thousand pounds, sentenced to be imprisoned for a year, and, most shameful disgrace of all, was adjudged to stand in the pillory. The pillory! that was indeed a thought worthy of Sidmouth, Castlereagh, and Ellenborough. Those men would have put Nelson in the pillory if he had been a reformer. But that cruel disgrace Lord Cochrane never endured, though it was strongly urged in parliament; for Sir Francis Burdett, always true and chivalrous, stood up and declared that, if a pillory were erected, he should stand on it side by side with his colleague. The weak though cruel government knew Burdett, and feared a popular tumult, so Lord Castlereagh reluctantly waived that part of the punishment. A popular subscription paid the fine; but the unjust disgrace still branded a brave man's scutcheon. The other prisoners were all fined in the same amount, and imprisoned. As for Mr. Cochrane Johnston, he fled.

From the beginning of this unfortunate entanglement, Lord Cochrane behaved like a brave, innocent man, almost careless of asserting his innocence. Mr. Secretary Croker suppressed a letter, important as a proof of Lord Cochrane's innocence. Everything went wrong. Cruel advantage was taken of a reckless sailor's hurt pride

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and contemptuous silence. His bitterest enemy, Mr. Lavie, whom, at Lord Gambier's trial, Lord Cochrane had openly accused of fabricating false charts, was chosen by the Stock Exchange committee as the solicitor for the prosecution, to the rejection of their own lawyer. De Berenger himself secretly offered his aid to the Admiralty and to the Stock Exchange; but the government, though eager for a conviction, were afraid to have dealings with such a scoundrel. They managed to get Cochrane expelled from the House of Commons by one hundred and forty votes to forty-four. The Westminster constituency, however, re-elected him in July triumphantly. Determined to take his seat, Cochrane escaped from prison in disguise, and presented himself on the 21st of March, 1815, at the right hand of the Speaker's chair. The marshal of the King's Bench was allowed to take him into custody once more, and he was marched off to jail to suffer the rest of his unjust sentence.

Lord Cochrane's bold and fearless explanation of the affair (when in his eighty-fifth year, and still a vigorous unbroken old man) thoroughly exculpates him in the matter. De Berenger's misfortunes had interested him: the giving him clothes to return in disguise to the Rules and save his sureties, was the result of a momentary impulse of compassion for a man almost a stranger. The moment his character was impugned, Lord Cochrane came forward and gave up the name of the mysterious visitor, and that was the one clue wanted by the Stock Exchange. If he had been one of the conspirators, why could he not have burnt the dangerous coat? If he was guilty, why did he not profit by the rise in the funds, and sell out hard and fast? If he was criminal, why should De Berenger, instead of posting to the City, go and spend two hours waiting at the house of his accomplice? If he was a sharer in the fraud, why did he refuse to take De Berenger in the Tonnant, when the rascal could so easily have changed his name, and been quietly shipped off to America, or landed in France?

No wonder the great heart nearly broke under that terrible disgrace. Once free from prison, Cochrane sought other worlds, and fought there bravely for liberty. The country he still loved had lost his services for ever.

As an old man, after a long career of glory, and looking back to this crushing blow, the hero said, "Yes, it was hard to bear; just, too, when the opportunity had come for professional activity, in spite of the jealousies that had always pursued me. My heart did sink within me at that outrageous sentence, and it required all my energies to bear the blow. It may be thought that after the restoration to rank and honours by my late and present sovereign, after my promotion to the command of a fleet when I had no enemy to confront, and after the enjoyment of the sympathy and friendship of those whom the nation delights to honour, I might safely pass over that day of deep humiliation. Not so. It is true I have received those marks of my sovereign's favour, and it is true that, from that day to the present, I have enjoyed the uninterrupted friendship of those who were then convinced, and are still convinced, of my innocence; but that unjust public sentence has never been publicly reversed, nor the equally unjust fine inflicted on me remitted."

Of De Berenger, the dark scoundrel who thus basely, and, to judge from a letter of his own, regretfully, plunged a brave and honourable man into a slough of disgrace, we know little more. He eventually wrote a clap-trap book on gymnastics, and became, we believe, a showy riding-master on the site of the present Cremorne Gardens.

Of all the ruthless and unprincipled acts of the Sidmouth government, there was not one more heartless and unjustifiable than this prosecution of Lord Cochrane. He did not benefit by the fraud; his complicity with it was utterly unproven; and the sentence was not only severe, but loaded with a humiliation intended to be worse than death. It was a disgrace to the ministry that restored this brave man's rank, that it did not also cancel the old injustice, reverse the sentence, and pay back the money that had been unjustly extorted.

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THE DEAR GIRL.

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CHAPTER XXIV. A RAY OF COMFORT.

Captain Filby had suffered severely during the winter from his habitual pains and aches, and from growing "older every day." His temper, already much inflamed by tropical service, was not improved. He did not own to these acute tortures, having a stoic pride which disdained to let the world know that he was at all inferior to the rest of it in strength or years. But he soothed his sufferings by becoming more ill natured, more malignant, every hour. Even to women, to whom he had hitherto maintained a sort of gruff courtesy, he had grown rude and odious in his remarks. For this sort of old creature, withering out of the world, friendless, cold, dismal, by beating the bars of his old heart while affections and sympathies are glowing ruddily about him, it were better that the Indian fashion obtained, and that he were carried out to the most convenient mountain to die from exposure. At all these settlements we hear now and again of some such old exile shivering out of life, with the greedy fingers of the foreign hireling already on the gold sleeve-links.

It was not yet come to that with Captain Filby; but his cough was very bad, his clearing of his throat a herculean hydraulic labour, most unpleasant to the bystanders, and his limp more and more conspicuous. His oaths — pointed with a spasm—were even more alarming. His stories and scandals were more malicious, and, it must be said, untruthful, and told with a savage eagerness to have them accepted. Any stroke of good fortune, any gleam of happiness for others, specially roused his envy and venom.

When all the colony was busy with Lucy's little story — and we may be sure the expatriated ladies were not slack in venting any amount of sniffs and head-tossing—Captain Filby dealt with her with by far the greatest severity. One day at Mrs. Dalrymple's, his sufferings having given him a fiendish energy, he even shocked his hostess, who had great indulgence for his humours, knowing how he was racked.

"Don't trust any of the pack here," he said; "the sham lovers and Lotharios, who are as genuine as the noblemen that come on the stage. There's not a half-a-crown among any three of them; and on washing-day how many of 'em must lie in bed for particular reasons?"

He saw Lucy looking at him, as she always did, with an unconcealed repulsion.

"Oh yes! my good young miss. I understand you. Keep up the little delusion. Leave my card, and you yours on me. Ask your dear papa about it, when you go home. He's pretty well behind the scenes."

Lucy coloured, and drew herself up.

"I shall do nothing of the sort," she said; "and you have no right to bring his name in, or to be so free with me or with him."

"Oh! is that the line? The dear papa! We believe in him to the end, of course. He's immaculate."

"To me he is," she said, calmly, and, as Mrs. Dalrymple described it, looking through the captain, "and that is enough. How kind, how polite, how becoming of you to slander him to his daughter!"

"Come now," said the captain, with a forced laugh, "my good Miss Lucy, keep that for your mamma or for Pringle."

"Neither," went on Lucy, with the same calm tone and look, but flushing up a great deal, "do I know of any behaviour on my side that justified your addressing me so familiarly. Unless, indeed, the wretched necessity which forces us to stay here exposing us to freedoms from those who are mere strangers;" and she swept away from the room, leaving the amazed Filby to roll his eyes and mutter:

"Infernal impertinence that, to put up with from a forward little brat!"

After this rebuff, which Mrs. Dalrymple and her daughters could not help enjoying a little, more from amusement at Lucy's spirit than from any hostility to the captain, we may conceive he had not the most amiable feelings towards her. The pains became also much more acute, and his stories about the young girl seemed to reflect every pang. He would say: "A regular intriguing miss as ever was turned out of a French school. They teach 'em all those demure faces and innocent tricks at so much a quarter, like the music. I tell you I have seen girls all the world over, and that's as deep and scheming a creature as ever made up to a *parti*. It's shocking! But watch a

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little, and you will see. Pairs don't go loitering down the end of the pier for nothing, with only an old fish-woman sitting on a wall. If I had a daughter, I know—which, God be praised, I have not—I wouldn't have such tricks going on."

The captain, too, would have stories also much more circumstantial, the coinage of which were favoured by Lucy's bold and confident behaviour before the community, and whose contemptuous looks, as she passed leaning on the arm of the man she thought the most perfect in the world, seemed to challenge and defy their remarks. This little folly produced ill fruits, and though Vivian was inclined to draw back and check such unnecessary displays, Lucy's impetuosity quite overcame his prudence. Her character was, indeed, opening every day, and acquiring a charming piquancy that was dramatic and attractive, and she was learning rapidly to take responsibility and rely upon herself. Thus the handsome man and the pretty English "mees" went about together, were met far off on long walks over the chalk hills, along an endless expanse of trunk lid country, bare, and worn, and whence they could look down on the sea. Sometimes of a fine evening they were passed at the end of the pier, in the darkness, watching the fishing-boats going out for the night.

"Nice work all this, ain't it?" Captain Filby would say.

Lucy having an instinct of these whispers, would not have abated a single walk, a single incident; and her look of scorn, and defiance, and contempt, as she passed the captain, galled that veteran bitterly.

Our Lucy was triumphant in this course of hers. She seemed to think that defiance won a victory over the mean, tattling creatures of the place. In reality, her whole victory was merely in not hearing what they said. But she was to be awakened.

One morning Mr. West came down, to the surprise of the two women for whom he rose with more interest than did the sun, with a calm cheerfulness. He even read the newspaper, which had long lain there neglected. He read them out scraps of English news, and speculated about what was going to happen in politics.

"I see," he said abruptly, and smiling, "you are wondering I am so sensible to-day. I do feel more rational this morning—more like a man, less like a donkey. What must you have been thinking of me all this time, when I have been behaving like an elderly schoolboy?"

Constance struck in, eagerly: "We don't think so. Oh, if you knew how we pitied and felt for you, and wished we could share your trouble and suffering."

"I know that," he said; "and I have been very indifferent to all your sympathy. But there is great allowance to be made. Once this madness gets hold of one, there is no arguing, no sense nor logic in the business. Time and suffering are the only remedy. Suffering! You see, I still talk the old folly. But henceforth, I trust——Well, do you know where I was last night?"

Margaret answered bluntly: "I suppose dismally patrolling along the pier, looking out at the sea."

"Wrong for once, Margaret; but right so far, that I was going there when I passed that old church, which was all lit up, and seemed to be actually trembling with the music inside. I stopped for a moment and looked in."

"You looked in?" said Margaret, who was a stern puritan.

He had indeed been passing by, when he heard the music, and met the people coming—principally young girls, who were being prepared for confirmation when the bishop should come round. He stood at the door, looking round the old yellow church, half in light, half in gloom, and now deserted. Presently, he saw a confessional door open, and the curé of the place—a sharp-faced, grey-haired M. Giles, a picturesque figure—come out, and cross the church. West had a slight acquaintance with this clergyman, whom the English, true to their caste, kept in his place as a Roman Catholic, but who, indeed, was not conscious of this neglect, and who had not time even to think of acquaintances; for he had a laborious life among the fishermen of the place, and was known for many gentle, charitable, and unobtrusive acts. Strangers had often noticed the spare figure, with the iron-grey locks and rusty gown, flitting round street corners as the darkness fell, on some good errand. For him Mr. West had always felt a deep interest, as though there was something genuine in that mass of falsity which made up the colony. As the abbé passed, he stopped and nodded to the Englishman with a very sweet smile.

"We have done for the night," he said. "It is time to go home."

"You must be tired," said West; "is there no one to help you?"

"To be sure," said the other, rubbing his hands. "There is my coadjutor, who does ten times the work, and has the knack of getting through more with only the same trouble, and doing it quite as well. Believe me, my dear Monsieur Vaist," said the abbé, stopping before him and looking earnestly at him, "work is our guardian angel; and the more work we have, the more blessings we have. 'Laborare est orare;' and when we have plenty to do, we have no time to think of the little trials and troubles which half the world fancies are breaking its heart."

There was something so friendly and significant in the way in which this was spoken, that West could not but understand.

"Ah, but you have your calling, M. l'Abbé, and do not belong to the world."

"But you, too, have you not your calling at home, in which I hear you have eminence? And as it seems to me," he added, with a smile, "you are as much out of the world as I am. Are you going home? Let us come to the

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pier, where my poor fishermen are, and which I think is as favourite a walk of yours as it is of mine. I should have been a sailor, if I had not been what I am. The sea is the purest thing on this earth."

West remained silent. He felt a curious charm in listening to this clergyman.

"I speak freely," said the abbé, "because our cloth has that privilege. But I remember your kindly and secret charity to that poor French lady and her daughters. I dare say you thought no one here knew it. It was that which made me take interest in M. Vaist and his family, though I am afraid your sister——No matter. It is that interest which makes me speak a little freely, as I would to one of my flock, and say how distressed I am to see you so changed."

West smiled bitterly. "Ah! I see! I suppose the story has reached you. I dare say you are amused. But, as you have learned by this time, it is easy to advise, easy to convince a fool of his folly; but he remains a fool still."

"It is human nature, dear sir; yes, the nature of morning, noon, and night; of every month and every year. Alas! sir, with us, who sit and listen to the weaknesses, sins, and sorrows, it is only the old, old story. With our French here," he added, with a sigh, "it all runs to that one song—women, men, girls, youths—misery, ruin, or what they fancy misery and ruin, all coming from what they call love. My dear sir, you will not be angry with me: at least I speak to a practical, sensible Englishman——"

West almost startled him by a loud laugh. "Practical and sensible, indeed! But, my good abbé, it is of no use—with *me*, at least."

"I would not say to you," continued the abbé, gently, "what I would say to others—to pray; pray hard, and long, and fast. *That* is the simplest remedy of all. You do not belong to us. But I would repeat, 'Laborare est orare'—work, occupation, interest. A little exertion—only a little—and the thing is begun; and what is begun is half done. Love! never was there anything so unreal. It is all *ourself*. We think it is all for another. It is a mere tone and temper of the mind—all selfish, I am afraid—a dream, a phantom. I am your friend, and have a privilege," he added, touching his hands. "I have dealt with thousands—with men of your standing, and have treated them with that medicine, laborare. For a few days it is irksome, bitter; but, believe one who has experience, it will succeed. Go about, enjoy the blessings of life, lay out your day, take your share in what is going on about you, and you will find yourself drawn into being interested. Then go to your own home; leave this place—a little unworthy of you; follow your noble profession. There is an old man's talisman. It will not fail. Good night, dear M. Vaist."

West wrung his hand and thanked him. Those earnest words had inspired him with confidence. He seemed to awake. "It *is* contemptible, and he was right. It is a selfish and personal thing. I have been behaving like a boy. In love with a child! They all have the story, it seems. Good Heavens, that I should have had so little care for my own dignity and self-respect! What folly! What a dream! 'Laborare est orare.' He is right, and there can be no harm trying."

He went to rest with that chime in his ears. He slept better, and came down, as we have seen, with a hope and purpose in his face.

After breakfast he went out, saw gaily dressed peasants and fishermen walking in one direction, and, asking the reason, was told it was the Fair of St. Peray. Here was acceptable news! Here was something to interest him; and he set off to the little show with cheerfulness and purpose.

"I shall make a day of it," he called out cheerfully, "and spend two or three hours. Then we shall go and see the packet come in, and—what do you say?—dine at the table d'hôte of the Royal, and show a little life and human nature to Constance."

"Blessings on that good abbé!" said Constance, devoutly. "His prayers have done this." And though a faint shade of sternness passed over Margaret's face at his name, she said, graciously, "He is a very good man, I believe." The Calvinism passed away. He left two happy women behind.

CHAPTER XXV. THE FAIR.

On that same morning, Vivian, who was fast regaining his strength and nearly restored, only growing a little fatigued towards the end of the day, came across joyfully. "That charming little Mrs. Jaques tells me there is to be a fair at the village; and she has got Jaques a holiday, and they are going off so smart and brilliant! We must go too: it will amuse you."

Lucy delighted in an expedition of this sort, and clapped her hands with enthusiasm. "Oh, we must go," she cried. "I would not miss it for the world."

"What is it, my hero?" said Mr. Dacres, entering. "There is some fun up, I am sure. Out with it, Vivy! Tell yours to command——"

"Only think, Harco, a fair, a little fair, out at St. Peray. Shan't we go? Oh, we must."

"Must me no musts, miss," answered Dacres, sternly. "So there's a fair, is there? 'None but the *brave* deserve the fair'—eh, colonel? That's neat. Good jury-box wit."

"But what do you say, Harco?"

"Go, of course, my podgets. In this dry sandy valley we call life, it has been my maxim never to pass such little scraps and patches of grass as we may meet. Let us three make a party and go."

So they did, and set off. It was a charming day, bright and cheerful, lightening even the monotonous French high road along which they walked for a short time. Presently they struck into the fields, which, indeed, about here, were pleasantly cut up with tracks and footpaths, the farmers about being pastoral, and good natured also. The fair was four or five miles away,

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and they met many of the country people in their best and most theatrical dress, hurrying to have their little innocent enjoyment. The three walked on together, and Lucy said she was now *so* happy. Mr. Dacres's companionship, however, was but of a fitful sort, for as they passed a little auberge he complained of fatigue, and, greatly admiring "the quiet peace and innocence" of the spot, would protest he must have just "two seconds" on the bench under the tree, and would pick them up at the next field. This he certainly did, much more exhilarated. In truth, the two lovers—they may wear that old-fashioned official name—did not miss him. They were busy with that one absorbing topic, which for such a pair has a vast height, depth, and width, that embraces the whole world.

"I am so happy to-day," said Lucy, dancing rather than walking, as she spoke. "I feel as if I were going to enjoy myself. Ah! What a delightful world it is! So kind—so amiable—so pretty! What do they mean—our clergymen—by saying it is hollow and false, and all that?"

He smiled, and then sighed. "I used to think so too, and I used to be timorous for the future. I dreaded what might come; but now I have learned to enjoy the present, and shut my eyes to whatever may come."

"Haven't you heard papa talking of that?" she went on, with animation. "He says we don't half discount all our amusements. He puts it so funnily: 'Twenty per cent, old pictures, twenty more, lumps of coal, fifty per cent in poisonous wine or an old gig: these representing our sorrows, there remains only ten per cent in real cash for our joys.' Papa has such droll fancies."

"Ever so many of those bills have been discounted for me," he said, sadly. "There is one nearly due now, and only a week or so to run——"

"You are not thinking of *that?*" said Lucy, anxiously. "You don't mind what papa says—it is all his love, his interest for me. *I* understand you, and know what is on your mind. Men cannot understand each other so well."

"But you do not, dearest, I fear," he said, "and you cannot, either. I dare not tell you everything which I ought. And yet what right have I to ask you to take anything on trust?"

"What right?" said Lucy, seriously. "Do you mean that I would not accept your saying you had a great and necessary reason without knowing it?"

"Ah, yes, Lucy; but it is not fair to you, it is not loyal, it is not honourable. Yet what *can* I do? I vow here to Heaven I am helpless! You know how I love you, and what I would do for you; and yet what must I seem, what must you think of me, if I am obliged to——"

"Do you whatever you think right," said Lucy, enthusiastically. "Whatever you must do, I can trust, I can believe in you, and can believe, too, there is some necessary and honourable reason."

"I knew that," he said, looking at her with infinite sadness. "And if I was forced, as I may be, to leave this," he added, slowly, "for two years or more—for there is no knowing——"

Lucy's face fell.

"Ah, am I asking too much?"

"No," she said, passionately, "it was not that. But not to see you all that time."

He smiled, and looked down fondly on her. "No matter what the discount, as your father says, I am content. Let me enjoy the present, and not trouble myself with what may never happen. But whatever takes place, whatever step I am driven to, I may trust that you will still believe me; at least, that you will not think the worst, but at least wait; and, as I live, time will clear all up!"

Lucy looked a little anxious, but her bright face was clear in a moment. "I promise—I swear," she said, and put her hand in his, "I engage. After all, there is no merit in confidence where there is nothing to doubt."

"Yet we shall be so happy," he said, with exultation. "We shall enjoy ourselves to-day."

Now came up Mr. Dacres, trolling to himself about the "Lass of Killiney," a lady whose charms he sang with much feeling and many trills and turns.

"Through night and its shadows,
Through mornings so shiny,
I'm mournfully seeking
The lass of Killiney—
Kill-i-i-ney,
The bee-you-tiful lass of Killiney."

A woodcutter in sabots looked after him with grave amazement, not at the singing, but at the mournful tones and pathetic shaking of the head.

"Well, my chick-a-biddies—how the dust flies! The little cogs and springs of my voice want oiling a little. Ah, if you saw me at the assize-dinner, when the cloth was drawn, and that old raven Jackson, Q.C., croaks out that he wants the 'Lass of Killiney!' *I* make her roll up the table and down again. I give her to 'em with a vengeance. But I can't do these feats here. The human voice, sir, must be fattened and made rich, as you would cattle on its native pasture. Yet, take me as I am, Lulu—rusty, gone to seed—hungering and thirsty for a draught of my own native air, you might back Papa Harco against the best shouter of 'em all in their best caffy concert."

They reached the little village in something over an hour's time. The sound of the drum and flute directed them to a field close by, which was all bustle, frolic, motion, and shifting colours. There were tents, and booths, and waggons, after the English race-course pattern; but the whole had a gayer and more theatrical air.

"Save us, Lulu, just look at the merry-go-rounds! Why, they're going by steam!"

To see half a dozen small wooden horses, of the very gayest skins, with long-legged and perhaps corpulent riders, flying round after each other at a headlong speed, each taking off a small ring on his "marlingspike" as

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he shoots by, has all the air and excitement of a real race—adding also the grotesque attitudes, the sprawling, the looking back, the exultations, and the comic remarks of the riders. Lulu laughed with delight at the comic and childish antics of the full-grown French men and women, whose whole souls were absorbed in their pastime.

Now came up the parti-coloured old women in queer caps, and yellow and scarlet shawls, and with what seemed real drums on their backs, which, when opened mysteriously, as drums never were, drew crowds of children eager for the delicious banquet of cakes seen stored within. Lulu was invited a thousand times over, and with many a significant speech, to purchase these dainties. Surely her handsome gentleman—her splendid gentleman—he would buy for his lovely sweetheart—a pair made for each other, and would live together happily, and see the loveliest and most blooming family in the world grow up about them! These rustic compliments, delivered in a shrill tone, and heard by all around, made Lucy blush, and Vivian smile. Mr. Dacres would have burst into one of his loud laughs of enjoyment had he been there, but he had "slipped off into a cool place." The pair, indeed, did not miss him. A party of two, as Mr. Dacres himself would have said, is "much more handy to work," is more compact and rounded off; and Lucy and her lover went about from this eccentricity to that. Here was the woman in the cart selling drugs and cures, and speaking with a fluency that amazed Lulu. Here were little shops where the most flimsy but elegant toys and trifles were sold: gaudy and gay and cheerful as butterflies, but with not nearly so long a life, and which gradually fell to pieces, to Lulu's amazement, as she carried them about. There, were yet greater delights — a little menagerie, with one bear, as the pièce de résistance, a theatre, and an exhibition of highly trained dogs and monkeys, which Vivian had seen somewhere and recognised, and pronounced would be well worth a visit.

It was quite a happy holiday. Then they went away and walked in the green lanes. Many remarked the handsome gentleman and pretty girl on his arm, and gentle women's eyes followed them and marked his fond look as his face was turned to hers, and hers looking up so trustfully at his, and who talked to each other with interest. But presently two mariners, who had walked over from the port, and who had witnessed the scene of the rescue, told a rustic or two, and Lucy soon discovered that her hero was being followed with admiring looks of curiosity, and even heard some of those rapturous soliloquies with which French women express their admiration of chivalry. She was proud indeed.

Towards the afternoon they returned to the fair, wondering not a little what had become of Mr. Dacres. Suddenly she thought she heard his cheerful voice, and, turning round, actually saw Harco, a "marlingspike" in one hand, flying round, mounted on a very garish cob, dappled vermilion and white all over, like a clown's trousers. He was in great spirits and exhilaration, his coat-tails flying out, and was calling to the centre of motion to get on faster, faster, and turning round every moment to a stout grizzly Frenchman behind, with a very open collar. Papa Harco nodded to Lucy pleasantly as he flew by. "Ah! Lu, if I had only my wig and gown here!"

After he had dismounted, he came to them, with his arm in that of the stout Frenchman. "That's what I call sport; next door to a kill in the open with hounds. I say, Vivian, if some of the circuit lads saw this! Egad, I am in such feather, I'd play leapfrog with my Lord Chief Justice himself. By the way, let me introduce Colonel Pepin—a fine man, sir. Soldiers should know each other."

The "ancient colonel in retreat" (Mr. Dacres was often very droll on this description, which was the colonel's own—"couldn't he say *retired* at once?") bowed stiffly and with disdain to Vivian; but smiled and simpered at Lucy with infinite homage. This was, indeed, the introduction he wanted. This officer was quite egg-shaped as to figure, and his head and neck together made up the shape of a Jersey pear. His throat was in creases. Yet, like every Frenchman of every time of life and condition, he thought himself handsome, captivating, and irresistible. Vivian he dismissed as a poor creature.

"We're all to dine together," said Papa Harco. "The colonel, who is very strong in that line, will look after the ordering. I'll back him for as good a spread as ever adorned the snowy damask. He guarantees the vintages too.

> Wine, wine, liquor divine,
> And served by the loveliest Hebe of mine!"

He often talked, later, of an amusing French colonel, whom he "had picked up out riding."

But Vivian understood the retired French colonel perfectly. He said, coldly and firmly, that he was sorry, but they must go home, as it would be dark soon.

"Oh yes, papa," said Lucy, eagerly, "you know we must go. Though," she added, wistfully, "it *is* very pleasant here."

"Is monsieur delicate, or afraid of catching a cold?" said the colonel "in retreat," contemptuously. "Why, the amusement is only beginning."

"You are quite right," said Vivian, gravely, "I *am* afraid. But, apart from that, Miss Dacres wishes to return."

"Not she," said Mr. Dacres, getting more into the spirit of the thing every moment. "Why, we've to spread the board yet, and wreathe the bowl. We must have something. Nature, bounteous mother, sir, can't live upon air. I am as empty as an Established church. No! no!

> Wine! wine! nectar divine.

Come, *do* stay, Lulu. I can't go back, you know, when I have once begun. I've laid my-

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self out, you know. I don't find myself in spirits in this sort of way often."

"Oh, then we must stay," said Lucy, eagerly. "What harm? Poor Harco," she whispered to Vivian, "his heart is set on it."

They did stay. So the pleasant day went by, the excitable Mr. Dacres overflowing with spirits. By-and-by he stopped to speak to Lucy, drawing her aside with mystery.

"I say, Lulu love, was that West cruising about here? You did not meet him?"

"No, dear."

"Because I'd have sworn I saw his hang-dog face looking out from behind a bush, like a Sambo in a jungle. But he was gone when I looked again. Maybe it was imagination—the baseless fabric of a vision."

Vivian turned quickly.

"He is not come to *that*, I hope," he said, angrily. "He is not turned spy, surely?"

THE BUTCHER.

From the cattle market to the butcher's shop is only a step, but it costs a good deal, especially to the West-end customer. The model butcher's shop is situated in some great thoroughfare. It commands not only a first-rate list of customers, whose red books pass through the hands of butchers, housekeepers, or professed cooks, but also a lively ready-money "cutting business," when the lamps are lighted, and the thrifty wives of clerks and working-men walk out, basket in hand and money in purse, to make a personal inspection of the dead meat shows, intent on getting bargains. Such a butcher carefully studies the tastes of all classes of customers, and provides for quantity as well as quality. He expects his journeyman to have swept the boards and hooks pretty clean when the late closing movement takes place on a Saturday night. The clever journeyman butcher is not second to his genteel but more effeminate rival, the haberdasher, in his powers of persuasion; indeed, next to a knowledge of buying, the journeyman, who is to rise into a master, more needs the voluble art of selling bargains.

Our model butcher commences his week's work at four or five o'clock on every Monday morning. Accompanied by his lad, he drives to the metropolitan market, to lay in the principal stock for the week. We will presume that the time of the year is the early winter, when cold weather has driven his best customers home from the sea-side, the Highlands, or the Continent, and there is no longer, as in summer, daily fear that a change in the weather may destroy the whole stock of the shop in a single night—a serious item in a butcher's trade expenses—so he may buy bravely.

His first steps are bent to the part of the market where, on an average throughout the year, five thousand cattle of one kind or another, from the primest Scot or Devon oxen to the poorest Prussian cow, or the leanest Polish harness-bullock, are ranged for his inspection most conveniently in regular lanes, on, perhaps, the bleakest, coldest spot that could have been selected in the whole metropolis. On this bleak hill, in the course of a year, over eighteen millions sterling pass from the butchers to the salesmen in the purchase of cattle, sheep, calves, and pigs.

In winter the supply comes from the yards and stalls of Scotland, Norfolk, Lincolnshire, and all the counties where roots are well cultivated, and farmers have capital to buy cake. The foreigners, before the cattle plague, often provided half the supply. The best came in summer from Holstein (called Tonnings, from the port of shipment), and from dairy-feeding Normandy, and the grass districts of Brittany, these being Short-horn crosses, and standing next in value to the Scots. But, in winter, the importation of grass-fed beasts, either from our own pasture counties or the Continent, ceases; the supply is kept up by cattle under shelter, fed on dry food and roots. These include the produce of the best farms in England and Scotland, and poor lean cattle of the Continent, drafts from harness and the dairy, called in the trade Prussians, but coming from districts as widely apart as Mecklenburg and Magdeburg!

Before the Cattle Plague Commission, a German salesman, who does one of the largest trades in the market, said: "I had cattle from Galicia, which were twelve days coming. I sold fifty for twenty-five pounds apiece to two persons at Bristol, who came for pure white beasts, for they said 'they are as fat as any we have ever seen.'" This gentleman imported four hundred beasts a week, and about two thousand sheep. The Hungarian cattle came chiefly by way of Bavaria to Mayence and up the Rhine; the Podolian and Galician by rail to Hamburg.

Our butcher will first select the beef for his best customers—his red-book customers. So many smallish, well-fed—not too young—that, when killed, will all be called Scotch beef, although the lot may include some Devons and even first-class Welsh. He will then pick out some large beasts—Short-horns or Herefords, or, more likely, Short-horn crosses of Polled Scots. The Polled Scot is very prime beef, and large, too. In our fathers' times, he was a wild, rough, rather long-legged customer, seldom killed before five years old. Care, selection, stall-feeding, and some suspected crosses, have made him, at two years old, plump, sleek, fine-boned, and still capital beef. These, in trade terms, "die well," and are the butcher's favourites, for there is more profit to be made out of the huge joints, although the quality and the nominal price may fall below the older and smaller beasts. Finally, to accommodate all pockets, he may invest in one or two low-priced foreigners, for the "cutting butcher" does not forget that when he sells a joint, "bone is paid for at the price of meat."

The beasts bargained for and bought, the purchaser marks them with his private mark, and

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the drover takes his perquisite by cutting off the hair of their tails. There were a great many other forms to be observed while the cattle plague was rife, which we omit. Paying is the next step, and that is conducted on principles of honour which those who only believe in long, complicated, legal agreements, can scarcely understand. The purchaser goes to the salesman-banker (all the cattle bankers have their offices under the clock-tower at the metropolitan cattle market); pays so much money for so many beasts, and returning, in ordinary cases, for his herd, receives delivery of his purchases without a scrap of writing passing; only exceptionally is an inquiry made to the banker whether the butcher has paid. In the course of the year, when, as before stated, eighteen millions sterling change hands, a case of fraud is almost unknown—a fact that speaks well for the general honesty of the London butchers.

From the cattle department our butcher turns to sheep, and makes his selection on the same principles. For the customers who understand and pay for quality, he purchases Downs, or the best half-breds—Shropshire Downs and Oxford Downs of great size are to be met with at times almost equal to the best pure Sussex. Then for quantity he takes some longwools, Leicesters, Lincolns, Cotswolds—good Dutch sheep which, in effect, are Holsteiners, with a strong English longwool cross. Butchers with a large ready-money trade amongst the labouring classes, like a big sheep—the wife likes a large shoulder of mutton. If the neighbourhood is very poor, he may buy some German Merinos; he can sell them at twopence or threepence a pound cheaper than better animals, and, though dear at the money in the abstract, they afford meat meals to those who otherwise would go without any meat at all. For his best customers, the butcher snaps up, if he has the chance, any three-year-old wethers that may have been fed for fancy in some gentleman's domain. As a rule, farmers do not feed English sheep beyond fourteen months, but they are well fed, and mutton is, on the average, better than what our grandfathers ate.

The day's supply selected—for we won't enter into the mysteries of the calf market, and pigs belong to the pork butcher—the drover next appears upon the scene. He is a stout fellow, not very neat in his person, nor nice in his language, with a public character for brutality. But when it is so (and there are remarkable exceptions), society is more to be blamed than the drover. Until very lately, the drover has had to get his living in all weathers, at most uncomfortable hours, by conducting from place to place animals whose vagaries would often upset the temper of an educated and fresh, much more of an uneducated and weary man, with many enemies and no friends amongst the class who employ him.

As every bruise on a beast or sheep is a serious drawback to its selling value, drovers who injure the stock entrusted to them soon lose their best customers. Something has been done by the badge system, by summonses and fines to discourage drovers' brutality; but more good seems likely to be brought about by a recently formed Metropolitan Drovers' Benefit Society, which, founded by a few sensible and benevolent salesmen, aims at raising the self-respect of a class who, in their way, are as indispensable as postmen or engine-drivers. The object of the promoters has been, besides establishing a relief fund to provide a weekly allowance for drovers in case of sickness, to encourage frugality, and to discourage cruelty and coarse language. With this view a club-house has been opened—where tea, coffee, and soup may be had, as well as books and newspapers—outside the market. It is to be regretted that the publican interest in the Common Council has hitherto been strong enough to prevent the drovers' club-house from obtaining a roof in one of the empty useless buildings within the cattle market.

The next step is to slaughter the stock purchased; and this brings us to the disputed question of public or private slaughter-houses.

A public slaughter-house is an indispensable adjunct of every great cattle market; but a private slaughter-house near the butcher's shop, if properly built, well drained, and well supplied with a force of water, is a much more economical arrangement for the butcher, and consequently for his customers. There have been private slaughter-houses which were abominable nuisances, wanting in all the materials for cleanliness; but at the present time, when there is a demand for every kind of offal of beast, sheep, or calf, there is no reason why a slaughter-house, with proper construction and management, should be more a nuisance than a stable. With a private slaughter-house a butcher does not kill until the moment that suits him—a matter of importance in hot summers, and close autumn nights; he is also safe from the pilfering of loose fat that goes on when a number of strange men are collected together. The eatable offal is neatly taken out, and conveyed to his shop in a clean fresh state, and the carcases, having been first properly and slowly cooled down, do not suffer in transit from a distance. To sell meat to the best advantage, it is absolutely essential that the butcher should make the most of the loose fat, the heart, the lights, the liver, the stomach, the intestines, and the blood. The offal of a bullock is worth from two pounds to fifty shillings; of a sheep, from fourteen shillings to a pound. Half of each of these sums is likely to be lost in the rough work of a public slaughter-house. At a slaughter-house, besides the pilferage of fat, the butcher is obliged to sell the eatable offal, which is often thrown on a dirty heap, to a wholesale contractor, while at home he would retail it at a retail price, and, consequently, be able to make a proportionate reduction on all the other parts of the same animal. A butcher doing a large trade in a poor neighbourhood puts down his loss on the offal of sixty

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sheep, lumped wholesale, at not less than two pounds to three pounds a week, for which, of course, his customers pay. Some persons during the restrictions of the cattle plague ignorantly proposed that all the supply of London should be furnished by a dead meat trade. Even supposing that our climate would permit the importation and railway conveyance of dead meat to take place in summer, autumn, and spring, it would be an arrangement most injurious to the interests of the working classes of London.

The arguments against undue encouragement of the dead meat trade, which also apply to any unnecessary concentration of slaughter-houses in the metropolitan market, are very well put in a pamphlet issued in support of a market and quarantine for foreign cattle on the Thames:

"There are powerful reasons why the dead meat trade should receive no special encouragement in London.

"London is not only the residence of the most wealthy, but also the very poorest classes.

"Every day there arrives in London a small army of poor labouring folks, who fly to the metropolis as a city of refuge, where work of some kind is always supposed to be, and generally is to be, had. These people, many of whom eventually arrive at a condition of employment which is to them affluence, found, before the advent of the cattle plague, some compensation for the dearness of lodgings in the cheapness of food, and especially of meat. Under ordinary circumstances, London has the cheapest food-markets in Europe, as compared with average wages, for those who buy with money in their hands. This cheapness in a great degree arises from the facility with which they can obtain all qualities of meat and what is called the offal, but which, in reality, includes some light, very nutritious, and even delicate parts of the animals slaughtered, as well as meat of varying qualities; for beef may be wholesome without being the produce of Highland Scots; and mutton from a Dutch or Merino sheep will feed a family that cannot afford Southdown legs or loins.

"The head and pluck, that is, liver and heart, of a sheep is sold by large butchers for two shillings; with the addition of a small piece of bacon, it will make a nutritious and cheap dinner for six or seven persons.

"Sheep's feet sold with the skin form a considerable article of food.

"So, again, a bullock's head, worth three shillings, and a heart worth two shillings, are amongst the articles of cheap food in London.

"Every sheep and every beast slaughtered on the continent of Europe, and sent dead to London, is a sacrifice, not only of a considerable amount of food kept back from the best market, but of a quantity of raw material which can be sold at a better price, and worked up into manufactured articles more advantageously in London than anywhere else. An increase of dead meat trade not only deprives the labouring poor of a supply of cheap animal food, but of employment in making up the hides, skins, &c., into a manufactured article.

"A sheepskin is worth from ten shillings to sixteen shillings. The feet that go with it contain bones with which the handles of knives are made. The entrails are manufactured into a variety of uses. Even the blood, which is usually the perquisite of the slaughterer, is valuable to sugar-bakers and manure-manufacturers.

"It must, therefore, be remembered, that every beast and every sheep sent to London in the form of meat, which formerly came alive, involves a loss of fourteen shillings of valuable material of food in a sheep, and of from forty shillings to fifty shillings in a bullock.

"Philanthropic professors of medical science too often forget that every restriction on the movement and management of a manufactured article is a tax. Restrictions may be necessary—there are cases where they are indispensable. The orders in council which restricted the movement of cattle during the time that the cattle plague raged, were a very serious but essential and inevitable tax on meat. We cannot afford in London to make meat unnecessarily dear."*

There are, however, many districts of the metropolis where, from the value of the property, it is not possible for private slaughter-houses to exist; therefore it would be well, instead of trying to centralise the killing business in the metropolitan market for the especial benefit of the public-house interest, to establish a sufficient number of district slaughter-houses on the most approved principles for light, drainage, ventilation, water supply, and general arrangement, with the special object of enabling the butchers of each district to have as short a distance as possible to traverse between the slaughter-houses and their shops. These abattoirs to be under the control of a public officer, but to be let to each butcher for use at fixed fees, under strict regulations.

The beast and sheep slain and dressed being ready to be cut up, the selling process—the most important of all—comes next. Here at once arises the question of price. Why is meat dearer than thirty years ago, in spite of enormous importations from every stock-feeding district of Europe—in spite of railroads, which have facilited the supply to our great cities—in spite of improvements in breeding and feeding, which have diminished by one-half the average time for ripening a bullock, and by two-thirds the production of fat mutton?

The first cause is to be found in the improved condition of the working classes all over civilised Europe, and especially in this country—an improvement first proved by an increased demand for more meat and whiter bread.

"Forty years ago, many well-meaning people wasted their time and money in circulating tracts and giving lectures, for the purpose of teaching

* Why have a Foreign Cattle Market on the Thames? By James Odams.

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the labouring classes how to cook and make the most of coarse and cheap food.

"Instructions were given for feeding a whole family on vegetable soup, or a stew slightly flavoured with the bones from the table of Dives. At that time, and even later, we were under the panic of over-population. There were grave apprehensions that the whole property of the kingdom would be eaten up by poor-rates.

"These apprehensions are things of the past. It is now universally admitted that we have more reason to fear emigration than over-population—an artificial rise of wages than a glut of labour. Nothing is more certain than that the labouring classes, who are the millions, will now have meat more in quantity and better in quality than what used once to satisfy them."

Again, the cattle plague has made a frightful blank. In March of this year the Privy Council reported that in twenty months nearly two hundred and fifty-four thousand cattle had perished, and over fifty thousand healthy beasts had been slain to arrest the spread of the plague. Graziers became disinclined to meddle with a description of stock so hazardous, and went boldly into sheep-breeding. An eminent Norfolk farmer—after travelling the length and breadth of England early in this year on an agricultural inquiry—declared that in all the counties he visited "he did not see so many fat bullocks as he had left in West Norfolk, while the country positively stunk of sheep."

There is another cause for the steady dearness of beef that has not, we believe, been ever mentioned in print. Butchers buy live beef by guess, relying for a considerable share of their profits on the loose fat and hide. But these are quite a lottery. The most experienced butcher may be mistaken by many stones in his estimate of a bullock's fat, for oxen have deteriorated in weight as the breeds have grown finer. The old-fashioned breeds — of which you may hear venerable butchers talk with rapture — fattened slowly in five or six years, and contained treasures of loose fat, with good thick hides, affording a large profit to the man who bought four quarters and sold up five.

The beasts of modern times, pushed to maturity at under three years, "do not die" nearly so well as their unimproved ancestors.

For these reasons, the days of cheap beef are gone, and for ever. But, even with these allowances, the retail prices at the West-end of the town do not seem to fit fairly with the wholesale returns. And yet in this steady balance against the customer there is nothing very extraordinary when it is examined.

The butcher is one of the few tradesmen who, in the face of an apparently unlimited competition (there are four thousand butchers in London), fixes his own prices and settles his own profits, as far as a very large class of his customers is concerned. Our grandmothers went to market, and knew the current price of everything; they chaffered and bargained as ladies of considerable fortune do still in the provincial towns of France and Germany. Our ladies of London cannot now go to market, and those who have a personal interview with the butcher are an exception. The rule is a red book, in which the weights sent by the butcher are accepted by the cook or housekeeper, or by any other grander person who rules the roast and boiled, the stewed and fried.

This book, very careful housewives—quite the exception—inspect once a week; others, once a month; many glance at it once a quarter, and a great many once a year, when the totals only are examined, grumbled at, and paid. The greater the consumption, the less the attention paid to details. Weights and prices are left to cook or housekeeper, who in mild cases expects a handsome Christmas-box from the butcher, but in the majority of establishments takes a regular "poundage." That is the term familiar to the trade. The kitchen-maid also expects something, and the butler, if he pays the bills, a handsome consideration.

How few there are who dare change the butcher, the poulterer, and the fishmonger, without the permission of a favourite cook!

This system destroys the butcher's conscience, if he had any to start with. We should not trust cabmen to fix their own fares. We do not hesitate to change our bootmaker, our tailor, and our hosier, if we can afford to pay their bills; but we leave the butcher to fix his own prices, with the slight check of a servant, whose perquisites are increased in proportion to the gross amount of the bills.

You can tell if a boot or a coat fits you, you can compare notes with your friends. But not one in ten of the well-bred classes, male or female, knows anything about the quality of beef or mutton until it is cooked—not always then—yet quality makes a difference of twopence to threepence per pound. The whole system of meat bought cheap, and sold dear, by the butcher, rests on the ignorance of housewives, the perquisites of cooks, and long unchecked credit.

The value of cash to a butcher will be found the moment you look into the cutting, or ready-money trade, and notice the prices at which those who know how to go to market lay in their provisions for the week. You will find the cutting butcher selling legs of mutton—perhaps not all wether legs—at sevenpence-halfpenny, when to his more genteel credit customers he is charging ninepence and tenpence. At the same time, it must be understood that, without trade knowledge, it is quite impossible to form an idea of what should be the fair price of the primest pieces, judging from a quotation of the wholesale prices. For instance, you pay a shilling a pound for the best loin chops, and, hearing that whole loins are sold in Newgate Market at sevenpence-halfpenny a pound, it seems a robbery; but buy a loin at that price, cut off the tail, the flap, the two wing-chops, and trim

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the fat off the back, then cut two pounds of chops at a shilling a pound, weigh what you have left, and you will find that to sell these prime trimmed chops at a shilling a pound is not a profitable transaction. Our system of plain cookery is very nice, but very extravagant. The trimmings which mutton-chops, loins, and ribs of beef undergo at the butcher's to make them presentable—a course which consumes a quantity of meat and fat that, under a more scientific system of cookery, would be turned to use—costs a great deal of money. It is common at the West-end for a butcher to first weigh ribs of beef, and then trim the joint at the expense of the purchaser.

As long as prices are moderate and money is plentiful no one complains; at length the shoe begins to pinch, and then there are very irrational protests, and still more irrational suggestions. There is no remedy but personal observation and cash payments. Co-operative societies have successfully taken in hand the supply of groceries and all sorts of dry eatables, but amateur butchering will never answer, nor deputy-butchering either. It is a trade that requires skill in buying, skill in selling all round, so as to make a good average, and a degree of zeal which no deputy will ever exert. Besides, the trade expenses are enormous; a single night will often destroy a whole shopful of meat, reducing the primest joints to the value of carrion.

In running over this subject—so interesting to all Londoners who love their dinner—so difficult to treat in a popular style—we have passed by the dead meat markets, soon to be removed from their present close and filthy quarters to a magnificent new home in West Smithfield. The dead meat market is supplied from beasts and sheep killed at the public and other slaughter-houses by carcase butchers all the year round. Consignments arrive from various parts of England, consisting often of hind-quarters, the inferior fore-quarters being consumed in the country. In the cold months, of great consignments of beef and mutton of the very best quality from Scotland, where the art of killing, cooling, and packing has been carried on to great perfection. There are very eminent butchers who kill no stock, but supply themselves entirely from the dead meat market. For what is called a short side of beef—without brisket, clod, sticking-piece, or shin—they will give an extra price of a farthing a pound. Of mutton they will buy chiefly hind-quarters. Within the last year a great trade in mutton has also been opened with Holland and North Germany. But a fuller notice of this dead meat trade may well wait until the great meat market is completed.

Our final conclusion is, that the grievance of dear meat falls chiefly on those who keep two or more servants, and is due mainly to their own mismanagement. The customers of the cutting butchers are not to be imposed on. They have other resources, and in winter the competition of Ostend rabbits and other food—which they will eat, but which "their betters" will not—prevents any extraordinary rise in beef and mutton.

CURRAGH COMFORTS.

Close along the Curragh edge, but fully an Irish mile from the site of the camp, straggles an irregular line of low thatched cottages built in old Irish fashion. The walls are made of mud and chopped straw beaten well together; the roofs have long been covered with many-coloured lichens and mosses; the chimneys have settled down on one side; and broad black or dark-green bands mark where the rain drips down the whitewashed walls. You stoop to enter the doorway, and stand upon the earthen floor. The "ingle nook" is spacious, with an earthen or stone seat on either side under the cavernous aperture of the chimney. Here old men and women sit and smoke. The turf fire on the floor sends up a steady heat under the three-legged pot hung by a chain from a beam across the chimney. It is the duty of a child or aged person, past more laborious work, to watch the "praties" as they boil and bubble. When the skins crack, and a white floury rift appears, they will be thrown upon a table to cool. With milk, sweet or sour, and a little salt, a meal is prepared and eaten hurriedly. Off the outer room there is usually another, sometimes two rooms, of very small dimensions. In these the wooden bedstead runs up close to the old chest of drawers—an article of furniture the peasantry are fond of. Old-fashioned chests of drawers are getting scarce now, for the emigrant to America endeavours to take one with him to the new country, and those made of "real old Irish oak" are not often met with now. You can scarcely walk between the bedstead and the wall. The air is close and heavy with the vapid odour of turf smoke. The windows, of four small panes—two of them bull's-eyes—were not made to open, and scarcely admit light. The air comes through the living room outside. The roof, unceiled, displays only blackened rafters supporting still blacker thatch. Occasionally the second room is parted from the first only by a low partition, formed of rough wooden planks or clay. Overhead there is usually "a loft" stretching half across the room, and here the hens roost at night, and, stimulated by the heat, lay eggs now and then in the hardest winters—and the winters at the Curragh edge are, in truth, severe, though bracing. The walls of the two or three rooms are covered with gaudy pictures, either of religious subjects or of "Irish heroes," the men of '98, or '48, or '67, and sometimes of celebrated race-horses which have made the Curragh trainers famous on many an English course.

Unwholesome, frouzy, cheerless dwellings these are at best; yet many a pretty girl comes hither "to pass her lawful time," and afterwards to lodge as bride and wife; for whether the marriage is to be performed by licence or after banns,

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the girl must live eight clear days within the boundaries of the parish in which the camp is situated. It is to this straggling line of cottages she comes, and rents a room, or takes a share of one with three or even four others, whether married or single. The soldier whom she followed hither runs over to see her when he can. She will do plain work or knitting, or labour afield in the proper season. The couple wait for some day when there is no parade or route march, hurry to the parish church, get married, and then often part for several days. A soldier's time is not his own, and if he marries without leave he cannot hope for "liberty" or indulgence. The wife, hardly a wife, waits hopefully for chance or fortune to place her on "the strength." That is the summit of her ambition. If her husband be well conducted, sober, and diligent, she may not have to wait long; but if he is familiar with the provost-marshal, miserable is her lot indeed. It is wonderful how some of these poor trusting girls live on in hope. A stranger would think that even death would be a release from the utter wretchedness of a few whose husbands are unkind; and yet it is a singular fact that, in five years, not a single soldier's wife committed suicide.

So long as these women have their health, their lot is tolerable. If the day be fine, they sit and work on the sweet Curragh sward, sheltered by the blossoming furze. They can see the long brown line of the camp upon the hill, and point out the very hut where the husband is on duty, or preparing for duty. They hear the roll of the drums and the bugle sound for parade or muster. "He is there—almost within reach—time will pass, and he will soon be here." She will see him to-day, perhaps, at "marching out," when the bands of all the regiments in camp are heard, now loud, now low, among the hills. The leaves have fallen from the hedgerows, festooned only with the vine-like sprays of the bramble, and decked with bright-red rose-hips. The long rampart of men in red or blue or rifle-green winds near her lodging, and her eye falls upon the place in the company where he must be. A smile and nod are all that pass between the wife and husband; but she is happy for the day. Still, many a time the flashing column marches past to the grand music of the bands, leaving behind within these stifling cottages the patient English or Irish girl whom sickness has struck down and prisoned there. In a former paper* it was stated that soldiers' wives are divided into two classes, widely distinct. There are wives married with leave, and those, no less wives, who have ventured to marry without leave. The former are entitled to many great advantages, not the least of which is their acknowledged position as part of the regiment, and their recognition by the wives of the officers. "Liberty" to marry is now made a prize for good conduct and honourable service, and in numerous respects the state of soldiers' wives, "married with leave," is greatly improved. The recent additions to the soldiers' pay, the abolition of many stoppages, the increased quantity and superior quality of the "rations," have all tended to render the life of a soldier's wife more comfortable. Amongst other benefits to which they are entitled is that of admission into the Female Hospital, where such an institution exists. Should there be no Female Hospital regularly constituted, an available room in barrack is set apart for those sick women or sick children the severity of whose cases requires their removal from quarters. But, whether in hospital or quarters, the recognised wives receive medical attendance and medicine. With these, they also procure what in the regulation-book appear as "medical comforts"—a phrase which means port wine, brandy, arrowroot, and essence of beef. No provision or allowance is made for nursing and attendance, but these are never wanting. Pass through the Female Hospital or invalid-room, and you will learn that human nature is not so selfish as some represent it to be. There are always willing hands and cheerful hearts ready to lighten the cares and cheer the gloom of the sick in hospital. Clanship, if the principle which actuates the wives in camp can be called by that name, is a part of our constitution, as love and anger are. The moment we belong to any special body, we defend it, and all within its pale are linked to us as friends and comrades. She who smoothes down the pillow of a comrade's wife to-day may need one to smoothe her own to-morrow. A regiment is not only a parish, but a little world in itself, and all dwelling under the same flag claim kindred. The list of articles included under "medical comforts" is a brief one; but whatever an invalid needs or wishes for—whatever she neither needs nor wishes, but which fellow-feeling thinks she would—is found somehow. Beside the medicine phial and the "comforts" will be found the plate with two or three ripe apples, an orange, a small bunch of grapes, or a few sweet-smelling flowers. Woman is self-sacrificing ever, and a soldier's wife in health will deny herself every selfish pleasure to ensure that of the sick daughter of the regiment who is "down" in hospital.

But wives "married without leave," and therefore without recognised position, cannot be admitted to hospital or the sick-room in barracks. They must bear their suffering as they can, in some thatched hut beside the Curragh edge, with its earthen floor, its smoky atmosphere, and broken windows. Yet when one of these pariah-wives seeks for medical advice, what regimental physician thinks of asking her whether she had married with or without leave? It is enough that she is ill and requires some help. Advice and medicine she obtains at once, whatever be her status; but "medical comforts" and the hospital are denied her. But she is also one of a clan, and is cared for, not with similar quietude or order, but more officiously. Port wine, arrowroot, small fruits, and even

* See vol. xviii., page 246.

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flowers are found under the moss-roofed hut where the invalid remains; and if a rabbit or chicken can be obtained in any honest way, they go as a matter of right to the poor "sick girl's" room.

It is difficult to ascertain with minute accuracy statistics of the health of soldiers' wives. The sanitary condition of the soldiers can be discovered to a unit, but the condition of the women can only be approximately compared with theirs.

The number of married recognised wives in the Curragh is nearly eight thousand, and the number of sick cases in each thousand during the year is four hundred and one. Many of these cases were trifling, and yielded to medical care at once, for the death-rate among these soldiers' wives is but 7.36 per thousand. This death-rate has not always borne so low a proportion, for in 1860 it amounted to 9.33 per thousand, a ratio nearly equal to that which prevails now among the men. Ventilation, drainage, good quarters, and other improvements, have had their usual effect, and two lives have been saved every year in each thousand by a small but judicious expenditure on the married men's quarters. The superior health of the women is seen at once by comparing it with that of the men. Soldiers' cases average one hundred and three per thousand yearly, and the death-rate is 9.99. That sickness and mortality among the women may be still further reduced is evident from the fact that scarlet fever, one of those diseases which may be said to vanish before sanitary improvements, is set down as the most prevalent disorder among soldiers' families, and the most fatal of the eruptive fever class. There is, too, a striking and suggestive fact connected with the health of soldiers' wives which ought to arrest the attention of the military authorities. Three-fourths of the cases of diathetic diseases abroad, and double the proportion among men at home, are due to ancemia, or poverty of blood, a disorder which is generally the result of defective nutrition.

So, then, the small black velvet hat or bonnet with its white feathers so often washed and dried to curl before the fire, the tiny bright red petticoat, the dapper little shoes, which make the soldier's child so trig and neat, are bought by the mother's blood. The soldier's wife has a hard task ever before her to make the small amount of savings meet the cost of, oh! so many things. Her child must be a credit to her husband and herself. She must not disgrace the regiment; she must win a smile of recognition from the captain's lady; at the infant school she must rank with the neatest. But how to do it all? So the mother lives on "next to nothing." She pinches, pares, and saves, sparing no labour, and cares not how pale and bloodless are her cheeks if the face of her child be bright and ruddy.

Just forty-five years ago there lived at Berlin one John Gossner. He had been a Roman Catholic priest in Petersburg, but who became a Protestant, and was exiled. He went to Berlin, and was pained at the sufferings endured by families crowded into a single room when one of their number was stricken with fever. He had but little means, yet he hired "a flat" in a house, and fitted it up as a hospital. Soon the neighbours objected, and John Gossner took his hat in his hand and went a-begging. There are kindly hearts in all the world if we seek for them, and John Gossner in time brought home enough to purchase a small house on the outskirts of the city. Ladies called themselves the Protestant Deaconesses of Saint Elizabeth, and nursed the sick. You cannot now see John Gossner's little hospital, for on its site rises a new and splendid building, already opened. This building is capable of holding a hundred and fifty beds. After the late war, seventy patients were admitted. The "Sisters," or "Deaconesses," are chiefly farmers' daughters, or in a similar rank of life. But high-born ladies do not hesitate to enter the hospital, and, like our own Florence Nightingale, lighten the suffering of sick soldiers or their wives. Is there a John Gossner near the Curragh to beg and buy some small house for sick soldiers' wives married without leave? Or will the time ever come when marriage shall not be a military crime?

GENII OF THE CAVE.

The cave is a railway-arch, and the genii are mighty modern magicians who have converted that arch into a gorgeous temple of luxury. Further, by a touch of their wand, an arid waste has become a smiling paradise, misery been turned into rejoicing, discontent to satisfaction, famine into plenty, and a social rite, hitherto repulsive and penal, made a thing of beauty and a substantial joy. Distress of mind, pain of body, loss of temper, and intemperance of language have disappeared under the beneficent sway of genii who rose from the antipodes to confer a boon on England, and who have aimed a severe blow at a tyranny under which the British railway-traveller has groaned ever since railways were. It was to the extirpation of the evils arising from this tyranny that "Mugby Junction" was especially dedicated; and it seems appropriate that the readers of this journal should be introduced to the doughty champions who have grappled with and conquered the peculiar abuses we have so long inveighed against in vain. The pork and veal pies, with their bumps of delusive promise, and their little cubes of gristle and bad fat, the scalding infusion satirically called tea, the stale bad buns, with their veneering of furniture polish, the sawdusty sandwiches, so frequently and so energetically condemned, and, more than all, the icy stare from the counter, the insolent ignoring of every customer's existence, which drives the hungry frantic—all these are doomed. The genii are rapidly teaching the public that better things are possible. Hearing to our astonishment that wholesome food, decently served, could now be obtained at certain railway stations,

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we inquired into the cause of this unique phenomenon, and became acquainted with the genii.

Before describing our interview, let us recal the last time it was our fortune to be allowed behind the scenes at a railway refreshment-bar. It was in a country town, when we were visiting the broken-down coachman of an esteemed friend. The poor old fellow was more than seventy years of age, rheumatic, and, on his employer finding him past work, interest was made with the railway directors, and the post of purveyor at the station charitably given him. Every one was glad, for "old Robert" was well known and popular; and that he should be now provided for at the cost of the railway company was matter for general rejoicing. None of us ever thought of his fitness for the post, nor of how a man who had so completely outlived his powers as to be unable to fulfil the easy duties he had been accustomed to all his life, would conduct a new business which required special qualifications and trade knowledge. Neither myself nor my fellow-townsmen thought of the railway station as a place at which eating and drinking was a possibility for ourselves, or of the ordinary travellers who passed through Dulby, and lunched or dined at its junction. These had no claim upon our sympathies, whereas the kindly face and venerable figure of old Robert were local institutions; and if by selling muddy beer, fiery sherry, and stale buns to strangers, his last days could be made easy, who would be churlish enough to cavil at his appointment? The little bar and the comfortless closet attached to it were, after all, neither better nor worse than scores of others on the Great Mudland line. There was no kitchen to speak of, and Robert's pastry was supplied from the little shop round the corner (kept by the head porter's wife), his beer by the local brewer (a director), his wines and spirits by the leading wine-merchant (a large shareholder), and his toffee, barley-sugar, and cigars from the general dealer in the main street, a Quaker, who was "very good" to Robert, and employed him on odd jobs to eke out the slender gains of a railway refreshment-bar.

Every Wednesday and Saturday the remaining stock of the pastry-shop was handed over to Robert, who had it at "stale price." The buns, and puffs, and sponge-cakes not required by the town were thus got rid of to travellers, and good Mrs. Pastry-Cook preserved her well-earned reputation for selling nothing but fresh eatables over her counter. The beer and porter were delivered periodically by the director's men, who were kind and affable to old Robert, and did their best to treat him as if he were a regular customer, instead of a half-dependent on their master. It is a curious circumstance, and one I apprehend to be mainly attributable to this friendship, that if I, or any other resident, chanced to look in for a casual glass of ale, that Robert drew it with his own hands from a distant cask, and disdained to serve us from the ornamental handles worked for the travellers' benefit. Carefully pouring it out, and holding it between himself and the light with a trembling hand, he would smile knowingly, as if to say, "as good ale as ever left Mr. Cochineal's cellars, and in as good condition as if it were drawn from your own." I never tasted the "property" malt, but it looked muddy, and smelt sour, and I once overheard a big man from the West Riding, who was swathed in mufflers and top-coats, and who had rushed in hurriedly while the train stopped, use highly improper language as he threw his glass down on the counter with much wryness of face and violence of action. The wine-merchant, in his anxiety to do poor Robert a service, sent to London for "a class of wine I don't keep in stock, but which is greatly sold at theatres and places of amusement, where the demand is large and undiscriminating." Toffee and barley-sugar were, for some mysterious reason, the viands most in request at this bar, and ladies and gentlemen who looked quite old would munch a lump of either as a relish to a stale sponge-cake, with an ardour and perseverance surprising at their age. Cigars were contraband; and if Robert or his daughter, yielding to the solicitation of travellers bent upon violating the by-laws, produced a box from a secret corner, it was as a hazardous favour which made criticism impossible.

It was well known that, after all his dealing, the poor old fellow had hard work to keep body and soul together, and that if he had not held his place at an almost nominal rent, and been leniently dealt with by his friendly creditors, he would have been speedily sold up. The custom was all forced, and the ordinary principles of commerce, the buying in the best and cheapest market, and the gaining a connexion by the excellence of the articles sold, were not merely impossible, but would have been laughed at as out of place and absurd, had any theorist suggested them to Robert or his masters. To be sure, the travellers by railway were not the only sufferers from the system. The directors and shareholders lost money by letting eligible premises at a nominal rent; Robert lost custom through the inferiority of his goods and the necessary exorbitance of his charges; and the people he dealt with missed a profitable channel for their several wares through treating their railway customers as serfs bound hand and foot to those with whom they had to deal.

Looking back with the light afforded me by the genii, I see that the system was radically and inherently rotten; that charity to Robert meant cruelty to the public, and that the results were painful to many, and unsatisfactory to all. But, while visiting my old friend's servant, it never occurred to me that there was any connexion between the manner of his appointment and the miserably unsatisfactory condition of railway refreshment-bars generally. So I listened to his request that I would interest myself with the directors—who were looked up to by Robert much as a devout Hindoo might regard Bhudda or Vishnu

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—to grant him an extra room, and left him with a very distinct and indigestive remembrance of a lunch of "spice-cake" which was like Derbyshire spar, and of the bare and comfortless aspect of the shabby little place. Since then I have, for my sins, visited refreshment stations of far greater pretensions than poor Robert's; but, with scarcely an exception, they have been as wretchedly meagre as his; and whenever it has been possible to peer below the surface, I have found the task of catering for railway stations, and for their supply of provisions and wine, to be conducted on similarly profitless principles. Sometimes the privilege is used as a director's or shareholder's job; sometimes it is given as a bonus to people otherwise employed; sometimes a brewer's nominee is first tied hand and foot and then put in to sell goods, by which he can only make a profit by weakening or adulterating: the one thing uniform is the shameful treatment of the public, and the natural indignation it has caused.

It was upon this field that the genii came, and saw, and conquered. At present the entire commissariat of more than one line of railway is entrusted to them; and they are also the chosen refreshment contractors of large public establishments, such as the Royal Italian Opera, the Horticultural Gardens, and the City Corn Exchange. Their refreshment-bar at the Paris Exhibition was the most frequented of all; their damsels the most popular; and their table d'hôtel one of the sights of that noisy, feverish place.

It is near Ludgate-hill, and in a small counting-house filled with books and papers, that I present my credentials and become acquainted with the genii, who are courteous men of business, with nothing to distinguish them from other successful mercantile or professional folk. Anything less like the conventional type of refreshment contractor than the quiet, well-mannered people before us, it would be hard to find; and we promptly decide that they are genii, who have assumed the shape of human philanthropists the better to carry out their beneficent aims. We have passed through a large outer office, like a bank, at which well-dressed clerks are busy upon ledgers and "returns;" and are seated in a smaller sanctum, a sort of "manager's parlour," and learn with wonder what railway refreshment contracting really is. "Capital, enterprise, experience," form, the genii assure us, the magic at the root of their success. This success they consider established; and are willing, nay anxious, to extend their operations. The genii are remarkable mortals, and their career and success at the antipodes sound like a chapter out of the Arabian Nights. Such trifles as huge Melbourne cafés, with stained glass domes, polished oak and rosewood floors and palatial fittings, and with billiard and news rooms of the latest type of luxury, seem to have sprung up at their command, and to have speedily recouped their enormous outlay. A refreshment-vestibule of immense area is opened in connexion with the Melbourne Theatre, and speedily becomes a popular dining-place, independently of its play-going customers. The genii are appointed refreshment contractors to the government railways of the colony of Victoria, and there inaugurate the system we are examining now. They become the caterers for the great Werribee encampment of the volunteers of Victoria, and provide satisfactorily for the eating and drinking of twenty thousand people, building a restaurant four hundred feet long, and in which one thousand people could and did dine simultaneously. They despatch one of their familiars to England with a draft for three thousand pounds, as a preliminary sop; and eleven of the All-England Cricketers are spirited to Australia on handsome terms, the genii clearing a large sum by the admission-charge for seeing those heroes play. Burning like two Alexanders for fresh worlds to conquer, the genii landed in England early in 1863. One of the twain had previously visited here, and contrasting the refreshment system in vogue on our railways with that under his own management in Victoria, at once decided to seize upon the vacant ground. His partner saw with him the vast opportunity for usefulness and advantage which existed in neglected England, and, after some preliminaries, they became refreshment contractors on a metropolitan line. Success was immediate, and has continued to increase from that time until now.

The genii are as warm advocates of "payment by results" as Mr. Lowe himself, and stipulate, before entering upon a contract, that the railway company shall, in every instance, provide the refreshment stations with good cellarage, adequate cooking facilities, and comfortable sleeping apartments. They pay, instead of rent, a per-centage upon their returns, so that the interests of contractors and company are identical. Every station is worked on a uniform plan, and the one we are visiting is the chief office and the heart and brain of the entire system. This system is one of intense centralisation. The eating and drinking at Birmingham or Dover is as closely supervised by the genii and their officers at head-quarters as if they sat in a back parlour at each place, and were constantly watching their local customers from behind the blind.

The operations are gigantic, and the elaborate method of book-keeping makes waste and fraud impossible. If any of the pretty girls in this employment—and there are in summer two hundred and fifty of these—allow compliments from idlers, or undue attention to their own personal appearance, to interfere with their usefulness, the fact is known at head-quarters before a fortnight has passed. Not by employing spies, nor any other derogatory course, but by a system of check which is so exquisitely minute that wastefulness in drawing beer, or indifference to customers, is proved by the inexorable logic of figures. The genii have twenty-one refreshment stations in full work, eighteen of which are on railways, and give

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employment to about eight hundred men and women. The accounts from every station, and from each of the departments which supply the stations, are made up and forwarded to the central cave every day, together with a return of the money taken and the corresponding checks. The familiars of the genii sort and compare these, and abstract their result into magic volumes, which show the profit upon each article sold, down to such trifles as a solitary Abernethy biscuit, one glass of absinthe, or a sausage-roll, as well as the net cost of maintenance at each of the twenty-one stations. The amount received and the quantity sold, the goods supplied and the stock remaining at each bar, are checked against each other—at some bars once a week, at others once a fortnight—by gauging and stock-taking sorcerers in the service of the genii. We are asked to test the system by putting a question as to what has taken place at any distant refreshment-room within the last few days; and, after a pause, demand the number of rice biscuits sold last week at Faversham, together with their cost and profit; and the quantity of macaroons and sandwiches consumed at the Chatham refreshment-bar in the same period. Smiling a little at the easy nature of the task, one of the genii flutters a few pages of accounts knowingly, and we have put before us, in the clearest way, the entire consumption at each of the bars selected, and every item of the stock left last Saturday, down to an eighth of a bottle of liqueur. "Another plan we adopt," continued the genii, "to guard ourselves against fraud and carelessness, and to see that each bar is properly worked, is to watch narrowly the surplusage column in the weekly returns, and occasionally to move the persons in charge. You see, in all our calculations we allow a certain per-centage over, for what is called waste. Our allowance is, moreover, so liberal as to make a sensible addition to the week's returns. Thus, every night, when the cash is taken, there should be a few pence or a few shillings more than the collective amount of the goods sold. Of course, if the young ladies are careless or wasteful, this sum decreases, and there is no better test of management than that the surplusage column should mount up steadily, and bear a fair proportion to the goods sold and money received. You'll see by this abstract that we mark a decrease in surplusage directly it occurs. If this diminution happens only once, we say nothing about it. If for two weeks running there is little or no surplusage, we guess there is something wrong. Not necessarily dishonesty, you understand, but lax management. What do we do? Move the person in charge to another station at which the returns are regular; sending the chief of this to control the bar at which the decreases take place. If we find the bar-returns to change places, the decreasing one to go suddenly up, and the one hitherto regular to fluctuate and fall, we need no further evidence, but are satisfied that the person we have trusted is a bad manager. Sometimes, moreover, a new eye will detect little faults of detail which have escaped the notice of the person always there, and will make suggestions which it may be important to carry out. There's no magic, I do assure you, either about our mode of management or our success; it's mere routine and figures; but routine and figures properly applied. We claim to have revolutionised the system of railway refreshment, simply because we commenced on a proper principle, and brought experience and capital into the business. We can make terms, where others have to accept them" (I thought of poor Robert, and the tradesmen who were "very good" to him), "and our departments are quite independent of each other, after the plan adopted in the large Manchester warehouses. Their heads, the chief butcher, or cellarman, or pastry-cook, sell their wares to the various bars, and keep as strict a profit-and-loss account on everything they part with, or buy, as if they were dealing with the outside public. They're all anxious, you see, to make the department they're responsible for remunerative for their own credit's sake; and while one desires to secure the largest profit, the other cries out the instant the charge is too high. If the manageress of one of our refreshment-bars, for example, found she was paying our butcher a higher price for meat than she could procure it for elsewhere, she would naturally object to have the profits of her bar reduced; and her complaint would meet with immediate attention, probably from my partner or myself. We're our own wine and cigar importers, bakers, confectioners, pastrycooks, and grocers, and we have, besides, extensive stores of glass, earthenware, and other requirements for our business. Our buns and cakes are sent down fresh every day to all the stations on the line from our bakery at Blackfriars, and those left on hand are sent back every night. Sweets are despatched in the same way from our confectionery factory at Ludgate. Then, again, our people have every facility for cooking and serving well. The stipulation with the secretary of this railway, that we should have sufficient room allotted to us for cellarage and kitchens, has been, I think you'll say when you've been over them, faithfully carried out. We claim to be the first people who made cheap wine popular, and we now give a claret, at a shilling the pint bottle, which is good enough for anybody's drinking. Our meat comes direct from Scotland, and we could show you some figures connected with the cost price of Aberdeen beef, which, I think, would make you admit the recent outcry against butchers' prices has been exaggerated. We have three Italian confectioners constantly employed. Our young ladies are many of them better paid than they would be as governesses or ladies'-maids, from both of which classes we are largely supplied. They are all provided with homes and looked after by us. Our cooking apparatus is of the most recent construction; our men-cooks are skilful and experienced; and" (here the genii lowered his voice

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to an emphatic whisper) "whenever we receive a complaint, we investigate it at once, hear both sides, weigh the evidence, and act accordingly. A gentleman writes up to us that his cup of tea was cold, or weak, at Birmingham, where our establishment is independent of the railway; or an old lady complains that her chop was ill served at Herne Bay; and passes are sent down to the people implicated, who come up and explain matters to us here."

Having heard thus much of the theory of this pleasant necromancy, we next see it in practice. Huge and well-stocked cellars, with clerks entering requisitions for wine from the various stations, and cellarmen silently at work; vast underground kitchens, where men in spotless white linen suits are busily engaged, and where the shoots to and from the dinner-rooms up-stairs are never idle; a private butcher's shop, with carcases of the Aberdeen beef in long rows, and joints of Moor mutton—in themselves a testimony of excellence—are preludes to inspection of gilded chambers in which scores of people are dining—all in comfort, many in luxury. There are, besides the railway bars, first and second-class dining-rooms, and dining-rooms for ladies only. In the first is a silver grilling machine, which, with the elaborately ornamented stove it works on, cost more than a thousand pounds. At a signal from one of the genii it is lifted, and I am gratified with a sight of its hall-mark. This is the cave, and there is as much difference between its present appearance, sumptuous, comfortable, and costly, and the dry arch it was before the genii exorcised its demons of rubbish and neglect, as between the bill of fare and wine-list, and poor Robert's toffee and "peculiar" sherry. Everything is on a club scale—glass, linen, food, and decorations. Joints, made-dishes, and the game in season are all being served, and it needs the shrill shriek of the whistle and the hoarse rumble of the trains overhead to remind us that we are in a railway station, and that this scene of comfort and magnificence is a mere addition to a traveller's refreshment-bar. The counters are in another department, which we inspect later, to find them luxuriously appointed and profusely stocked. They are crowded with customers, many of whom are evidently not travellers, but who prefer being served by the bright-eyed, cheerfully obliging nymphs here, to patronising taverns or coffee-houses. We are again assured that the smallest and most distant station under the control of the genii differs from what we see only in its proportions and in the variety of its viands. Borrowing the bill of fare of the first-class dining-room, which is changed every day, we compare it half an hour later with that of one of the principal clubs in Pall-Mall, and find it superior in some particulars, and equal in all. Under the genii, the hungry Briton may count upon nourishing food and wholesome drinks, and recalling the miseries of the past, the insolence of Mugby, and the barrenness which has prevailed from Dan in England to Beersheba in North Britain, we mentally kiss the magician's hand, and pray that the outlying railway world may be shamed or coerced into imitation.

A CHRONICLE IN WORSTED.

O THE sun, the blinding, burning sun on these rich green Norman flats! It is a relief and a comfort to quit the road, and creep at last into the narrow Bayeux streets, lime-white and clean, inodorous, and with every upper window a miniature garden. The love of flowers is universal in Norman towns; and the poorer the neighbourhood, the gayer and richer often the hanging garlands on the window-sills. We call to mind one at Caen, a perfect bower of geranium, heliotrope, and fuchsia, high under the eaves of a most ancient and decayed dwelling; a picture in the street, with a bird-cage hanging in the midst, and the bird singing as if in Eden—sunshine, song, and sweetness living and thriving still in the cold shade of utter poverty!

It is these spots of brightness, suggestive of another brightness within, that give their distinctive charm to these old French cities. The busy working world has passed them by. No country town in peaceful England was ever drowsier at midsummer than Bayeux to-day. Yet Bayeux has seen stirring times—war, revolution, civil riot, religious despotism, in all their varieties of misery, triumph, and defeat; and not so long ago but that their visible traces remain, and living traditions of them survive amongst the elder generation.

We asked nobody the way anywhere, but dreamed along at our leisure on the shady side of the streets, turning hither and turning thither where we espied attraction; the whole long day being before us, and we in no haste to have done with our sight-seeing. As we took our slow journey, with a pause here and a pause there, now at the window of an old curiosity-shop, then before a still-life group of splendid luscious fruit in a barrow, three ladies flashed by us—ladies in carmelite costumes and broad straw hats, from across the Channel like ourselves, but burdened with bags, and in virtuous hot haste to accomplish their duty towards Bayeux.

"They are coming from the Tapestry," we say, and set our faces in the direction whence they are returning.

The Tapestry is kept at the city library, but we see no building that bears a frontispiece of publicity. There is a woman standing within a little wicket, darning a stocking, and apparently on the watch for any casualty fortune may be kind enough to send to break the monotony of the day. We will inquire of her, for it is noon now, and the blaze is cruel.

"*This* is the library," says she, in answer to us, and opens the wicket that we may pass into a court where broken stone coffins and mutilated stone figures, heads, limbs, trunks, are disposed in picturesque confusion, with pots of

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brilliant flowers and creeping weeds amongst them. The luxuriant clusters of a grape-vine cover the whole front of the house, which serves as home to the letters, arts, sciences, and antiquities of Bayeux; and chief amongst them all, to that famous chronicle in worsted of the conquest of England by the Normans, which was worked by Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror, and by the ladies of her court.

We used to believe that other theory of the production of this tapestry which attributes it to Saxon maidens, professional embroideresses commissioned by Bishop Odo, the Conqueror's brother; but, now we have seen it, good-bye for ever to that notion! It is certainly the work of amateurs; very feeble amateurs at the beginning, and very heedless some of them too, but who improved as they went on, and gathered interest in their self-imposed task. Nevertheless, we can follow for some way the hand of a naughty damsel, who traced the legs of her knights in white cotton, and neglected to fill them up; and we are of opinion that, after a time, some good-natured gentleman, with a better idea of drawing a horse than the ladies, was pressed into their service, and helped them with their designs. The achievement is so old, was done by such noble fingers, records specifically such vast events, that masculine historians speak of it with awful respect; but a lady may be allowed a laugh at its grotesqueries, for surely Matilda and her ladies must have laughed as they wrought at some of them. The black horse standing on its head at the Battle of Hastings, for instance—was a serious countenance inclined over him, from the tip of his nose on which he is balanced, to the tip of his erect tail? Who drew him? That wild witty fellow, Robert Carthose, perhaps, Matilda's favourite son; for to a well-regulated feminine imagination the conception would have been impossible.

And as for the work, it is not beautiful nor exquisite, nor even curious as handicraft. The groups are outlined in white chain-stitch, and each figure is filled in all of one colour, with those fine worsteds which we used to work over balls when we were children, and called *cruels*. The stitch employed is the long *cruelling* stitch, and a lady might easily do a knight and a horse in a day. The word *tapestry* describes the famous relic very inexactly to those who have only seen old English work. Queen Matilda's chronicle is done on a piece of coarse linen cloth, about seventy-five yards long, and half a yard deep, and the linen unadorned is the background. It consists of fifty-eight groups or scenes, the explanation of each being worked in Latin under it, and forming the lower border; the upper border is composed of the shields and crests of the knights and gentlemen who took part in the Conquest. As it is now arranged, even those who run may read it. On the ground floor of the library glass cases have been constructed, in which it is stretched at length on the line of the eye. We began at the beginning, where the cloth is much decayed and roughly mended, but where the first group of the story is as legible as on the day it was done, and there we read from scene to scene the famous tale of the invasion and conquest of England.

We have read it elsewhere in scores of books, but still it makes an oddly vivid and fresh impression on us in the old worsted chronicle. The figures have no anatomy, the faces no expression, but the action of them is lively and true. There is King Edward sending Harold to Duke William, to tell him he shall one day be king of England. That opens the epic, and it goes on dramatically through Harold's journey and voyage, his shipwreck and capture by the Count of Ponthieu, his deliverance and reception by William at Rouen, to the great scene in the palace at Bayeux, where he swears upon a hidden shrine of relics to recognise and support the Duke of Normandy's right to the English throne. Then follows Edward's death, and Harold's acceptance of the crown, to the great joy of the people; his coronation, and the soothsayers predicting evil days for him, from the sign of a star that has appeared. The news of these events is carried to William, who commands ships to be built, sets sail, and lands at Pevensey. The cooks prepare meat, and William dines, then holds a council at Hastings, and, after various preliminary scenes, harangues his army, and engages Harold. Harold's brothers, Gurth and Leofwin, are slain, his army is cut to pieces, and he falls with arms in his hands. On the field of victory, William returns thanks to God; and there Matilda's worsted chronicle concludes—frayed and worn at the end as at the beginning, but still telling the story of her lord's great conquest completely, and as fairly as any of the chroniclers who have written it with pen and ink.

The library has other treasures—pictures, scientific and archæological collections; and in the long upper room where the books live, there was one person deep in study, without his coat. The open windows look over the green square; and when we have finished our investigation, thither we take our lazy way, to eat pears and échaudés for our lunch (if ever you go to Bayeux, don't try to lunch on échaudés; they are no better than bubbles). We found a bench in partial shade under the limes, where sat an old gentleman raising a lean hand to feel a breath of air; there was not a breath. But here, as elsewhere, the boys were irrepressible. A busy group, out of school, came upon the Place to fly kites—one a kite of Brobdingnag. Oh, the perseverance, the patience, of those close-cropped lads, coaxing this monster kite to rise! They tried and failed, and tried and failed again; until at last a stray breeze for a vagary caught it up, drifted it twenty yards or so, and then dropped it like a shot. This was too much. The master of the kite wound up his string, and lifting his precious big toy from the ground, walked off with it, disheartened for the day.

Really, Bayeux is a very quiet place. We wonder whether anybody was ever born here—anybody remarkable, that is. Yes, the Chartiers were—Alain the poet, secretary to Charles the

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Seventh, Jean, his brother, the chronicler of St. Denis, and Guillaume, bishop of Paris, one of the three commissioners appointed by the Pope to revise the trial and condemnation of Joan of Arc. Anybody else? Admiral Coigny. What did Admiral Coigny do? We don't know. He is a name in the guide-book, and he fills a page in history that we have either forgotten or never read.

As at Caen, so at Bayeux, there are many resident families of the aristocracy—quite a society, indeed, but, for the nonce, a society as invisible as if it were in the moon. All the world has gone to the sea, to Luc, to Lion, to Étretat, to Trouville. The world has shown its sense, we also will go to the sea; let us journey to-morrow by the Délivrande to Luc. So be it—and now to creep back to the railway for Caen.

SIR JOHN'S TROUBLES.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

If ever there was a man who ought to have been happy, but if ever there was one who was thoroughly miserable, it was Sir John Milson, K.C.B., retired Major-General of Indian service, resident at 104, St. Andrew-terrace, and member of the Senior United Service and the Oriental Clubs. He had, by thirty-five years' hard professional work in the East, attained not only a comfortable position for the remainder of his days, but had brought with him from India an honourable reputation as a soldier. Sir John had not been born to wealth, and in gaining his present rank and name he had not, like many of his contemporaries, lost either his liver, his temper, or the faculty of enjoying England and English life. Sir John was a type of a class and a profession whose virtues are but too little recognised amongst us. He was the son of a country clergyman, who obtained a cadetship for him in the East India Company's service when he was little more than sixteen years of age. This happened in the good old days when our Eastern Empire was governed by a Court of Directors in Leadenhall-street, and when the voyage to India was performed in the large frigate-like ships that constituted the trading fleet of the honourable corporation which ruled over a kingdom as big as Europe.

When John Milson reached Calcutta he was attached to a native infantry regiment at Barrackpore, was promoted in due time to be ensign in a native corps "up the country," and after having passed through three years of pale ale drinking, snipe shooting, and hog hunting, turned to in earnest to study the languages, and having passed the requisite examination, was appointed interpreter and quartermaster of his regiment. In India, officers take a pride in being soldiers. The Indian army, in this respect, more resembled, before the days of amalgamation, the French than the British service. No man is more respected in Bengal, Bombay, or Madras, than the officer who knows his duty thoroughly, and takes credit to himself for the way that duty is done. John Milson was one of this kind. He was proud of his regiment, proud of being able to drill the battalion—the quartermaster in the Indian army is an officer on the regular roster of the corps, and, being mounted on parade, acts as a second major at drill—proud of his knowledge of the languages, proud of the confidence his men had in him. Before he was five-and-twenty he had been through a campaign, and mentioned in general orders; a year later he was appointed second in command of an irregular corps, which, at thirty, he commanded, although only a captain in his own regiment and a brevet major in the army. About this time, being on leave at the Presidency, he was captured by the bright eyes and good figure of Annie Stevens, a young lady who had just landed at Calcutta to join her father, who was a Colonel and a Deputy-Commissary-General. Miss Stevens, although she had been hardly a month in India, had already refused two highly eligible offers. Old Mr. Currise, the Sudder Judge, had paid her great attention, and she—knowing him to be some years older than her father, and being great friends with his three grown-up daughters, who were all older than herself—accepted his presents, and took drives in his carriage, just as she might have done those of an uncle or a grandfather. But when this yellow old widower suddenly went down on his knees one fine morning and asked Annie to become the second Mrs. Currise, she first thought him in joke, then laughed at him, and ended by declining the honour intended her. "Society" in Calcutta thought that Currise had been very badly treated, and took care to let Annie see that they had a very poor opinion of any young lady who would refuse so eligible a person as a Sudder Judge drawing four thousand rupees a month, with a chance of a Seat in Council on the first vacancy. "Why did you not accept him?" remonstrated old Mrs. General Fancsome, who, when Currise had been rejected, had volunteered to act as his mediator with Annie. "Mr. Currise has a brother on the Direction, the Adjutant-General is his first cousin, and he is distantly related to the President of the Board of Control. Only think what you might do for your family if you accepted him. But Annie pleaded, "He is so very old."

"Not a bit, my dear. He only came out to India in '14, and allowing him to have been twenty years of age, that would only make him a little more than sixty."

"But," said Annie, "I am not eighteen yet;" and was deaf to the voice of the charmer. In vain did her father, the Deputy-Commissary-General, and her mother urge her. She was determined not to lead "society" in Calcutta at such a sacrifice; and so she declined the offer of the Sudder Judge's hand a second time—for an offer it really was which old Mrs. Fancsome had urged upon her.

In like manner had she received and declined the offer of hand and heart made her by a great military magnate, no less a person than Colonel Fathix, the Commissary-General himself, a

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man who was not more than five years older than her father, and who had never been married, was known to be immensely rich, and to have the best cook and the best cellar in British India. Colonel Fathix was not more than fifty-nine, or perhaps sixty, when he proposed to Annie, and having for many years been looked upon as quite a gay young bachelor, retained still that brevet rank in "society." His friends always thought that Fathix would leave India, when his time for retiring from the service came round, without a wife, and consequently were both astonished and annoyed when they perceived he was paying his addresses to "that strapping fine girl, sir," as they called Annie Stevens. In India people live fast, and courtships are invariably short as well as decisive. The fact of Colonel Fathix being at the head of the Department in which Annie's father held a post, was enough of itself to make people certain that his suit would be accepted. And it would have been a good thing in the monetary way for the Deputy-Commissary-General, if Annie could have seen matters through a pair of Indian spectacles. However, she did not, and rejected when it was offered the hand of her ancient military admirer, as she had that of her civil adorer, the old Sudder Judge.

After having "jawaubed"—an Anglo-Indian term, which means, answered, or refused—two such very eligible persons in one month, Annie Stevens had not what the Americans call "a good time" of it with her parents. Father and mother looked upon her as a child who might have forwarded their interests in life very greatly, but who had, upon two separate occasions, deliberately thrown away as many excellent chances. Her father, the Deputy-Commissary, felt this very severely, and in more ways than one. He was a poor man, and needed a much better appointment than the one he held, in order to pay what he owed, put by a little money, retire in due time from the service, and go home. With either a Sudder Judge or a Commissary-General—rather let us say *the* Commissary-General, for there is but one in each Indian Presidency—as son-in-law, he would have been certain of advancement in the service, and would, in all probability, have attained his object in a very few years. Not only, however, had that hope vanished, but his chief, Colonel Fathix, looked very black at him, hardly spoke when they met, and even in their official communications was now as laconic and disagreeable as possible. The fact was, the old boy had given out when the Sudder Judge was "jawaubed" by Miss Stevens, that he, the aforesaid Fathix, could "go in and win" what the civilian had not been able to secure. So sure was this gay dog of winning his bride, that he made sundry bets at the Bengal Club and elsewhere —"three to one in gold mohrs," and six to two in dozens of "Simpkin"*—backing himself to win the fair Annie, and make her his bride within a certain number of months. He had lost his bets, and was not by any means improved in temper thereby, the more so as sundry old fellows of his own standing in the service used to joke him about wearing the willow, and similar old-fashioned jests.

Annie's parents believed that, however fine a girl—and that she was as fine a young woman as ever landed on the Hooghly there can be no doubt—their daughter was, she would now never be able to marry. "I only ask you," said the poor old lady, Mrs. Stevens, when she poured out her griefs to some of her familiar friends—"I only ask you how it is possible that any man would propose for a girl who has thrown over a Sudder Judge and a Commissary-General. I am sure she will live and die an old maid."

But this prophecy, like many others, was destined to prove false. Within a month after she refused the Commissary-General, Annie met at a Government House ball John Milson, who was then the Commandant of an irregular regiment, a major by brevet, and a Companion of the Bath. Milson had come down to the presidency on leave of absence. His reputation as a soldier was already pretty well known, and as a not slight additional recommendation, he was a man of more than average good looks, with that deference for the weaker sex which always makes its way with women, and a total absence from that self-sufficient puppyism, which of all other things they hate the most. The first day he saw Annie he admired her very much; the second he liked her more than he admired her; the third he was desperately in love. A fortnight later—for, as I said before, in India people live fast—he proposed to her in the verandah of old Currise's house; for, by the advice of his counsellor, old Mrs. Fancsome, that infatuated Judge had given an immense ball to the whole "society" of Calcutta, in the hopes that Annie might, by seeing the magnificence of his establishment, repent her of the "jawaub," and consent to become the second Mrs. Currise. Amongst other guests Major Milson had been asked, and having previously ascertained that Annie was to be there, he went to the ball determined to know his fate. The host had to be attentive to so many great people of "society" during the evening, that he had little time to devote to Miss Stevens. However, he managed after supper—the old fellow could not dance, and this alone, as they say on the turf, "weighted" him very heavily in the race for a wife—to get a few minutes' conversation with her, and ended a somewhat nervous harangue by asking her to become his wife. Annie was a frank, open-hearted girl, and although she was really grateful and pitied the old Judge, could not resist the pleasure of a joke. She curtseyed very low to him in reply, and said that she had barely half an hour befor accepted the hand of another gentleman.

"And pray may I ask," said the astonished Currise, "who the fortunate individual is?" and was not a little surprised when she named Major Milson. "Milson, Milson?" he kept repeating,

* A "gold mohr" means sixteen rupees, or thirty-two shillings. "Simpkin" is the Anglo-Indian for champagne.

"Milson! Why, that is a young fellow who commands the Second Irregulars; he has not fifteen hundred rupees a month, and owes at least fifty thousand."

Miss Stevens replied that she was not au fait with the major's monetary affairs, but that she had accepted him for her future lord and master, and on this the conversation ended, not, however, without the old lover—who at heart was really a good fellow—offering her his congratulations, and saying he felt sure she would be happy with her future husband.

Not so, however, Annie's father, the Deputy-Commissary-General. It is true that nothing could be urged against Major Milson's character; but there was no concealing the fact of his being very much in debt. His pay and allowances amounted to about fifteen hundred rupees, or one hundred and fifty pounds per month, which makes about eighteen hundred per annum English money. Now, as Indian officers are obliged by deductions made from their pay, and by grants from government for the same purpose, to make ample allowance for their widows and family, this income would have been quite enough to marry upon, if Major Milson had only been free from debt, which he certainly was not. And, in India, being in debt invariably means that the debtor is under deductions to pay off his debt, either to one of the banks, or to some agent or merchant who may be his sole creditor. Milson made no secret of his difficulties; in fact, in India there are no secrets about anything, for every one knows his neighbour's affairs quite as well as he does himself—we all inhabit glass houses in that country. To these debts, reducing as they did the major's income to something like four hundred rupees a month, the Deputy-Commissary-General made a very serious objection; they formed an insurmountable obstacle between the major and his daughter. However, when a young lady has made up her mind to a thing, there is very little use thwarting her, for in the end she is certain to have her own way. Annie Stevens heard all that had to be said against her lover, and determined to accept him with all his monetary imperfections upon his head. She said she was determined to marry him, and then to get him out of debt, and she accomplished both designs. Of the wedding and the grand doings which it caused in Calcutta we need not write, for is it not inscribed in the proper columns of The Englishman and of the Bengal Hurkuru of the day? After their marriage, Major and Mrs. Milson went "up country;" and, owing to the influence of the latter upon her husband, and also to a promise which he had made her before they married, he sold off his race-horses, dismissed his English jockey, parted with his "shikaree" elephant,* put all his rifles, guns, racing saddles, four-in-hand harness, and such-like unnecessary luxuries up to auction, retaining merely one charger for himself, and a bullock gharrie, or spring covered cart drawn by bullocks, in which his wife could go about to pay visits, or travel when they were marching, or go to church. He wanted very much to purchase a carriage and pair for her use, but she would not allow him to do so, saying that their first duty was to get clear of debt, and their second to lay up money against a rainy day, when sickness or other causes might oblige him to go home on leave.

And she carried her point. Until he married, Milson had always found that as fast as he paid off with one hand he borrowed with the other. Of his fifteen hundred rupees a month he paid off regularly eleven hundred to his creditors, and yet his debts seemed never to decrease. But his wife proved herself a capital woman of business. She took his affairs in hand, reduced their household expenses to something less than half what they were when Milson was a single man, commencing her reign by turning off old Hassein Allie, the faithful Kitmagar, or butler, who had robbed his master for the last fifteen years with a perseverance worthy of a better cause. So well did Annie succeed in her financial operations, that in two years after their marriage a sensible diminution was made in the amount Milson owed, in four years he was nearly clear, in five he was a free man, and in six they had commenced that nest-egg which afterwards increased so largely. In the mean time Milson had been promoted from brevet to "pucka"* major, from that to lieutenant-colonel, and had been offered, and had accepted, an appointment in the Political Department, which gave him three thousand rupees a month, or about three thousand six hundred pounds sterling per annum. His expenses were, as a matter of course, somewhat increased, but still Annie kept a very tight hand on the purse-strings. They had no family, and thus were saved a hundred necessary outlays which are imperative upon those who are obliged to live in India, and have to send their children home to be educated. Milson never came home for his furlough, for he looked forward to making up what would enable him to spend a certain income in England, and only wanted to return to Europe when he gave up the service altogether. In due time he obtained the rank of major-general, and with it an appointment which obliged him to reside at the Presidency, being nothing else but that of Commissary-General, out of which Annie's old admirer, Colonel Fathix—long ago gathered to his fathers, and buried in the churchyard of his native parish in Hertfordshire—had made so much money. In this position Major-General Milson began to roll up money in earnest—somehow or other Commissariat officers in India always do. Annie—no longer a very young woman, for they had been married by this time more than twenty years—still looked after the purse, which now contained something very comfortable in bank shares, East Indian railway scrip, and other substantial securities, besides

* A "shikaree elephant" is an elephant trained and accustomed to being used in tiger-shooting, deer-shooting, and in other sports where the sports-

* "*Pucka.*" an Anglo-Indian term for *bonâ fide.*

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a highly respectable balance at the "Agra and United Service Bank, Calcutta Branch." When the mutiny broke out, Milson did the state excellent service, so much so, that at the strong recommendation of the Secretary of State for India, he was made a K.C.B., and was thenceforward known to the world, as he will be to the readers of this little tale, as Major-General Sir John Milson, K.C.B.; Annie, as a matter of course, becoming Lady Milson, and much honoured as the wife of a well-known gallant officer. Milson then left the service in which he had done so much good work, and came home to England. His pension, together with what in the Indian service used to be called his "off-reckonings"—equivalent to the pay as full colonel of a regiment which is given to general officers in the English army—amounted to fifteen hundred a year, and the interest of what he had saved, his money being well invested in Indian securities, gave him about three thousand per annum additional. He was at the time of the opening of this story in excellent health, and, being but little more than fifty years of age, was able to enjoy himself as keenly in England as if he had never been out of the country; and, indeed, far more than the majority of languid youths whom he met at the club and at every dinner or evening party to which he went. In field-sports few men could beat Milson. He was as good a shot, as straight a rider across country, and could handle the ribbons of a four-in-hand drag quite as well at five-and-fifty as he could at five-and-twenty. He had introductions to the best houses, was well received everywhere, and was much liked wherever he went. He took a keen interest in all political and social movements, had been asked to contest a Midland borough in Parliament, and had more than half made up his mind to do so at the next election. In London he belonged to two good clubs, and go where he would he always met people who in Bengal, or in some Indian campaign, had known him and received some kindness or other from his hands. He had been a very popular man in India, and was now quite as much liked in England. His health was good, his digestion excellent, his household well arranged, and the balance at his banker's more than he required. With all these many advantages was it possible Sir John Milson could be unhappy? He was about as miserable a man as is to be found within the limits of the kingdom. What his troubles were, how they arose, who caused them, and how they were cured, must be told in another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

One of the oldest—if not *the* oldest, and certainly the most intimate—friend whom Sir John Milson had in the world was Colonel Laber, of the Bengal Horse Artillery. The two soldiers had gone out to India together some thirty years before, and their respective careers had been very similar. As cadets, Milson had gone out for the infantry, and Laber for the artillery, and had in due time joined their respective corps. For many years they had been stationed at the same place, and in hog-hunting, tiger-shooting, horse-racing, and the other occupations which form the staple amusements of young Indian military men, they had mixed a great deal together, their pursuits being in these respects very similar. As years passed on, both had sobered down considerably, more particularly Milson, who, as we have seen, had, when a brevet-major, married and settled in life. Laber remained a bachelor, but this had not impaired the intimacy between the two friends, and whenever they met, or whenever they were at the same station, no two officers saw more of each other. In the race for promotion, the infantry officer had often headed the artilleryman, and vice versâ. Laber was a regimental captain some years before Milson, but the latter had got to be major before his friend, who had again reached the rank of lieutenant-colonel first. After this Milson had again come up with his friend, and had reached the rank of major-general, and had been able to retire upon his pension, his old friend having then attained the rank of full colonel, and being in command of a brigade of horse artillery. Since his return to England, Sir John Milson had often written to ask Colonel Laber why he did not retire from the service, as he was now entitled to his pension, and, never having married, had no cause or reason to save money, as his friend had done. But the reply was always the same: "My pension," wrote Laber, "will die with me; and as I have others depending upon me, I must save something for their sake before I give up the service." The colonel never mentioned what persons were dependent upon him, and as Sir John knew he had never married, he made sure that there was behind the scenes some widowed sister, or impoverished brother, or nephew, or nieces, for whom his old friend thought it incumbent upon him to put by for the future. In these brief paragraphs about himself, Colonel Laber offered no explanations, and therefore Sir John made no further inquiries. He thought that there must be a skeleton more or less unsightly in his old friend's cupboard, and that it was not for him to ask to see that which the other was evidently so unwilling to show. A certain amount of correspondence —an uncommonly frequent one, considering the great distance apart and the now entirely different occupations of the two friends—was kept up after the return of Sir John Milson to Europe, and presents were, so to speak, exchanged from time to time between the two veterans.

"I have been over to Delhi," Colonel Laber would write, "and saw there some very beautiful scarfs of quite a new design and fabric. I have sent one down to Calcutta for transmission by the next mail to Lady Milson, and I hope she will accept it from her old friend."

He had a great respect for Annie had the colonel, and whenever she asked him why he did not marry, would always answer that he was waiting until he could find a lady exactly like her; and, indeed, the saying had become quite

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a joke between the two friends, not the less relished because it was somewhat old.

"I am looking everywhere for the counterpart of Annie," Sir John used to write after he got home, "but have not yet succeeded in finding her; when I do, she shall be packed up and sent out overland to your address. But, in order to console you in your bachelorhood, I have sent by Southampton a newly invented breech-loading rifle, which the Bishop of Bond-street has just brought out, and which, unless the hand and eye of the man who killed the tiger just twenty-four years ago this month at the Jussulpore ghaut have lost their cunning, ought to do much execution, after the cold weather is over, in the Terrai jungles. The present is from Annie, who sends her love, and hopes still that your next Christmas dinner will be eaten in this house, and that you will give up what really seems to be your intention, of dying in harness. Seriously speaking, or rather seriously writing, do, my dear Laber, come home before you get too old to enjoy life in England. You are now entitled to your pension, which, with off-reckonings, will give you one thousand two hundred pounds a year. You must have saved a few thousand rupees, quite enough to purchase and furnish a box somewhere in the country, where you can rent good shooting. In the season you can come up to London, and I need hardly say that if you would eat seven dinners a week in our house, it would please us more than if you ate six, and that for the six we shall be more thankful than for five. I will get your name put up for the Senior and the Oriental, at both of which places you will meet a host of old friends. You will be quite well enough off not to deny yourself a park cob in the season, and a month at Homburg or Vichy when that is over. Surely such a life is in every way preferable to soldiering at your age, particularly when you have no special object—so far as I can see—for saving money. You must be tired of India. The country has entirely changed since we soldiered together at Cabul, and since the days of the mutiny a curse seems to have descended upon the service. What pleasure can you have in field-days, in blowing up young subalterns for not being more regular at the riding-school, or in sitting as a magistrate in the orderly-room, and in awarding punish drill to drunken gunners? Be advised, old friend, and come home; send in your papers on receipt of this letter, and write me to welcome you at Marseilles, at Malta, or even at Alexandria. Annie says she would like nothing better than a trip to the latter place, and that we will both be delighted to meet you there, go all together by the French steamer to Jaffa, visit Jerusalem, thence by Damascus into Syria, spend a couple of months on the Lebanon, and come home by Constantinople and the Danube. Say the word, be up and doing, and you will find us as good as our word."

In due time, some seventy days or so, there came a reply to this letter, but not such a one as Sir John hoped for, and, in the most important particular, by no meansw hat he had expected, as the following extract—comprising the chief part of the letter—will show:

"I only wish, my dear Milson, that I could follow your advice, leave the service, and go home at once. But, as you will see before you finish this letter, I cannot do so until I have scraped together a few more of those rupees which we all despise so much whilst we are young, but find so absolutely necessary when we get older. And this leads me at once to the pith of my tale, which for many years I have wished to tell you, but somehow, when the moment came, never dared to speak of until now I am obliged to do so. You have often joked me about having a skeleton in my closet, and I have as often denied the imputation; but I did not speak the truth. I *have* a skeleton in my closet, and, what is more, I am about to send it home ere long to be placed in your keeping, whilst I remain out there to work some years longer for what will make it independent when I am gone. My large pay and allowances out here, and the very economical way I live (for I don't spend more than the junior second lieutenant in the regiment), has enabled me to insure my life very heavily, so that if I die before I leave the service, my heir will be able to claim ten thousand pounds. In the mean time, I am rolling up my savings in the best and safest investments, and, so soon as I can write myself down as worth that amount in hard cash, I will consider my labour for others at an end, and betake myself to the ease and dignity of a retired Anglo-Indian in an arm-chair at the Oriental Club.

"But, before I go further, my dear Milson, in this my confession, I do exact a promise from you, which I am quite sure you will give, for the sake of old days when we both went out as griffins together, and in remembrance of a friendship and an intimacy which has now spread over a great part of half a century. The promise I want you to make is this—that you will not reveal to a soul—*not even to your wife*—what I now tell you, and that you will keep the secret religiously until, if ever, I release you from observing it. I shall take no further steps in the matter until I hear from you in reply to this letter; and when I do hear, as I expect, promising secresy and accepting the trust, I will at once carry out my intentions.

"You will be surprised to hear that I have two daughters, of nineteen and eighteen years respectively. Their mother was what in this country we call a Portuguese, which, as you know, means a half-caste descendant of the old conquerors of India. I met her, and was married to her according to the rites of the Roman Church, when I was on leave at Goa, about twenty-five years ago. Unfortunately, the marriage, owing to some want of formality about the papers I ought to have submitted, was not legal according to the Portuguese law; had it been so, it would have been also legal in England, and my daughters would have been entitled to the usual allowance from the military fund at my death. Very soon after our marriage I was sent, as you may remember, to Burmah, where I had a political appointment. My wife followed me there in due time, and, as I was the only English officer at the station, the fact of my wife being dark was not observed. I never mentioned the fact of my marriage to you, for, like all Anglo-Indians, I felt somewhat ashamed at my wife being a half-caste. I always intended to tell you of it some day, and, had we ever been at the same station together during my wife's lifetime, I should of course have made a clean breast of it. She lived seven years after our marriage, and, curiously enough, these were exactly the seven years in which you and I

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saw so little of each other. I was three years and a half in Burmah; then I was ordered, on temporary duty, with a battery, to Affghanistan, and, as you remember, although in the same army, we were in different divisions, and did not see very much of each other. During that time my wife remained at Burmah, where I joined her at the end of the campaign. A year later she had her first child and a year afterwards her last, which she died in giving birth to. Our marriage was a very happy one under the circumstances, but I question whether it would have been so had I been stationed at any place where there were other ladies, and where my poor wife's deficiencies of education and manners would have been brought into contrast with them. After her lights—after the fashion of her people, her education, and her manners—she made me an excellent wife, and I don't think we ever had a disagreeable word. It was only at her death, when I wanted to put my two babies upon the register of the military fund, I discovered that, although married to her in the eyes of God and by a clergyman of her own church, I was not legally married according to the laws of Portugal, and therefore was not so according to those of England. I took the best legal opinion in England, and every lawyer confirmed this view of the case. A marriage of any English subject is considered as lawful as if the Archbishop of Canterbury had performed it, provided it is lawful in the country where it is solemnised, but not so otherwise; and, to my intense sorrow, I discovered that my two daughters were illegitimate when it was too late to rectify the error.

"A bachelor home in the hot plains of Hindostan was no place for young children, and I therefore determined to consign my two girls to the care of the French nuns, who have a convent in the Himalaya Hills. I did so, and for many years only saw them now and again when I could run up to pay them a short visit and snatch a mouthful of cool air for myself. My wife had on her death-bed made me promise that they should be brought up in her own faith, and this I promised solemnly should be the case. The lady superior of the convent never knew that the children were mine, nor do the girls themselves know it. When I took them to the convent, I said they were the orphans of a friend of mine who had died in very bad circumstances, and that, not being likely to marry myself, I had adopted his little ones. I gave them the name of Faber, and to this day they go by the name of Ann and Mary Faber. They are two lovely girls—not the least like me, but the very image of what their poor mother was when we married, only not so dark. They look more like Italians or Spaniards, and, unless they alter very much indeed, will grow up very handsome women.

"And now, my dear old friend, you know what my skeleton is, or, rather, you know that I have two of them; and you can understand why I have remained out in India so long. Not being legitimate, my two girls would be destitute when I die, unless I can manage to save up something to leave them, and I have fixed the minimum of that 'something' at five thousand pounds each. If I am spared four years longer, I shall be able, what between the money I have saved and the amount I can spare from my pension towards paying for a life insurance, to leave them this amount at my death. But not until they are much older, and are able to understand the difficulties I was placed in with regard to their poor mother, will I ever tell them, or tell any one else, that they are my daughters. You are the only person on earth that knows my secret, and I rely upon your honour not to mention it, even to Lady Milson, although, of all other women on earth, she is the one for whom I have the greatest esteem. If you will do this, and take charge of the two girls when they reach home, you will add a very large item to the already long list of kind acts for which I am in your debt. Only remember these girls must not be known to any single being as my daughters. Their name is Faber. They believe that their father was an English merchant in Burmah, that both their parents are dead, and that I have adopted them.

"What I want you to do for them is as follows: Immediately after I receive your reply—and I will gladly pay for a telegram as far as Suez, so as to anticipate the mail—I will prepare the girls for their start, and send them to Calcutta, there to embark for England. But, in any case, it will be some three or four months after you receive this before they can reach Southampton. In that time I want you to look out for some respectable lady with whom they can be boarded, and who will take charge of their education, and provide the requisite masters for them at my expense. In short, I should wish you to engage a suitable person for them as governess, and to take a small house somewhere in the western suburbs of London for her and the girls, where they can have all the advantages of good masters. I will send you, by the same mail that takes the girls home, five hundred pounds; this will serve to outfit them, on their arrival, with clothes, &c., and to furnish the house you take for them neatly. After that, I will remit home four hundred or five hundred pounds per annum, out of which the salary of the governess, the rent of the house, the girls' clothing, and all other expenses ought to be paid. If you don't think it enough, let me know, and I will send more. I need hardly remind you that you should be very particular in the person you select as governess. The girls can read and write English well, and have a fair knowledge of history, but they are utterly ignorant of all that the world calls accomplishments, and have no more idea of music or drawing than your old Kitmagar, who, by the way, comes regularly once a month to ask news about 'Milson Sahib' and the 'Mem Sahib.'

"And now I shall bring this letter to an end. I have made my confession to you, told you how you can help me, and shall await your answer with some impatience, although I am pretty certain that it will be in the affirmative. There is merely one thing I find I have omitted to say, which is, that as, according to the promise I made their mother, the girls have been brought up as Roman Catholics, it would be better if you procured the services of a governess belonging to that church."

This lengthy communication of his old friend, Sir John Milson found lying on his breakfast-table one morning about Easter. According to his wont, he had got down-stairs a few minutes before his wife. The Calcutta mail had been delivered that morning, and there were four or five Indian letters (as well as "The Englishman Overland Summary"), and one or two for his wife, for both had many friends who remembered them in the land of the sun. Colonel Laber's handwriting at once caught Sir John's eyes, but he generally left it to the last, preferring to scan the communications from others before reading the long, pleasant, gossiping epistle of his old comrade, which recalled many bygone events—deeds in the battle as well as the hunting field; night attacks on

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the Khyber Pass; outlying pickets at Cabool; jolly mess-dinners; race-meetings; tigers shot, missed, bagged, and lost; shooting-parties living in tents; and all the other thousand incidents of a soldier's life in India. "Here is a long letter from the old gunner"—the name by which Colonel Laber had been known for the last thirty years—said Sir John to his wife, as he opened it between the intervals of eating his egg and tasting his tea. "What can the old boy have to say?" Presently, as he began to read it, his attention got more and more riveted, and Annie had to ask him twice for rice (like all Anglo-Indians, the Milsons always had rice on their breakfast-table) before she could draw his attention to the every-day business of breakfast. When he looked up, his face wore such an appearance of astonishment that Lady Milson was almost alarmed. "Why, John, what is the matter? Has anything happened to Laber?" she asked, and this recalled to his memory what he had just gathered from the letter, that all regarding the story of his old friend's marriage, to say nothing of the advent of the two young ladies, was to be kept a profound secret from his wife, from whom Sir John had never before in his life concealed anything. He mumbled out some tale about bank shares having fallen in value, and that he must look after the interests of his old friend. Lady Milson did not ask to see the letter, for she had letters of her own to read, and was not a woman in whose character curiosity was a leading feature. Sir John said something about having letters to write, and an appointment at the club, as an excuse for hurrying over his breakfast, and made off to the back dining-room (called his study), there to think over the difficulties which his old chum was about to impose upon him.

"Why on earth I am not to tell Annie anything about the story is more than I can understand," said Sir John to himself, as soon as he was alone. He read the letter over again from beginning to end, every now and then uttering some expletive of bewilderment. "Married, and never told me a word about it. A French governess; furnished house; *two* girls—very beautiful. What on earth will people say or think when they hear I am the paymaster of a suburban residence inhabited by three ladies? If I could only tell Annie, and ask her advice! I must ask *some* person's advice. I can't order a French governess as I would a pair of boots or a hamper of wine. No, hang me, I can't do it. I'll write and tell the gunner that I really must decline, unless he allows me to tell Annie all about it."

Such was the determination—which lasted rather less than three minutes—at which Sir John arrived. But then came the thought, would not his old friend have done as much for him, had he been in the same situation and their positions reversed? Who was it that years ago lent him three thousand rupees to pay his racing bets, which he would have been utterly and for ever disgraced if he had not met at once? Who was it, when he heard Lieutenant Milson was laid up with jungle fever, rode a hundred miles in ten hours through a blazing hot Indian sun, and nursed his friend until he was on his legs again? How did he escape the sword of that Affghan fanatic, near Candahar? was it not by Laber shooting the man dead as he rushed upon his friend, who was looking away at the time? How many years ago was that—thirty? no, something short of that—about twenty-six or seven. What jolly days were those Affghan campaigning times! Where were all the fellows who dined at the Horse Artillery mess the night before Guznee was taken? We sat down sixteen. By Jove! I remember all their names much better than I do those of the stupid stuck-up people I met last week at Lord Eggspoon's. They are all gone now, except Laber, myself, and Spinvith, the little doctor, who has retired and lives at Cheltenham. I *will* do it. Laber would do as much, and more, for me if I wanted him. I must pull through the business somehow. I dare say there are agencies and places where French governesses can be procured. It will be a nuisance keeping the affair a secret from Annie, but I must do it, if I want to serve Laber. The mail goes out to-night. I'll write and say that I'll do all he wants, and I'll telegraph at the same time to Suez, so that he will know my determination by the mail that leaves there to-morrow for Bombay, and the message will be sent on at once from that place to Meerut. Do it? Of course, I must and will. If there was no difficulty to overcome, nothing unpleasant in doing what the old gunner asks me, there could be no merit on my part. Of course I'll do it."

And so Sir John betook himself to the Oriental Club, and wrote by that night's mail to tell his old friend that the girls might be sent home, and he would do his utmost to do all their father wanted, and to have a suitable house ready for them on their arrival in England.

Next week will be commenced

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A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

Prologue.

The Storming of Seringapatam (1799):

(Extracted from a Family Paper).

I.

I address these lines—written in India—to my relatives in England.

My object is to explain the motive which has induced me to refuse the right hand of friendship to my cousin, John Herncastle. The reserve which I have hitherto maintained in this matter has been misinterpreted by members of my family whose good opinion I cannot consent to forfeit. I request them to suspend their decision until they have read my narrative. And I declare, on my word of honour, that what I am now about to write is, strictly and literally, the truth.

The private difference between my cousin and me took its rise in a great public event in which we were both concerned—the storming of Seringapatam, under General Baird, on the 4th of May, 1799.

In order that the circumstances may be clearly understood, I must revert for a moment to the period before the assault, and to the stories current in our camp of the treasure in jewels and gold stored up in the Palace of Seringapatam.

II.

One of the wildest of these stories related to a Yellow Diamond—a famous gem in the native annals of India.

The earliest known traditions describe the stone as having been set in the forehead of the four-handed Indian god who typifies the Moon. Partly from its peculiar colour, partly from a superstition which represented it as feeling the influence of the deity whom it adorned, and growing and lessening in lustre with the waxing and waning of the moon, it first gained the name by which it continues to be known in India to this day—the name of The Moonstone. A similar superstition was once prevalent, as I have heard, in ancient Greece and Rome; not applying, however (as in India), to a diamond devoted to the service of a god, but to a semi-transparent stone of the inferior order of gems, supposed to be affected by the lunar influences—the moon, in this latter case also, giving the name by which the stone is still known to collectors in our own time.

The adventures of the Yellow Diamond begin with the eleventh century of the Christian era.

At that date, the Mohammedan conqueror, Mahmoud of Ghizni, crossed India; seized on the holy city of Somnauth; and stripped of its treasures the famous temple, which had stood for centuries—the shrine of Hindoo pilgrimage, and the wonder of the Eastern world.

Of all the deities worshipped in the temple, the moon-god alone escaped the rapacity of the conquering Mohammedans. Preserved by three Brahmins, the inviolate deity, bearing the Yellow Diamond in its forehead, was removed by night, and was transported to the second of the sacred cities of India—the city of Benares.

Here, in a new shrine—in a hall inlaid with precious stones, under a roof supported by pillars of gold—the moon-god was set up and worshipped. Here, on the night when the shrine was completed, Vishnu the Preserver appeared to the three Brahmins in a dream. The deity breathed the breath of his divinity on the Diamond in the forehead of the god. And the Brahmins knelt and hid their faces in their robes. The deity commanded that the Moonstone should be watched, from that time forth, by three priests in turn, night and day, to the end of the generations of men. And the Brahmins heard, and bowed before his will. The deity predicted certain disaster to the presumptuous mortal who laid hands on the sacred gem, and to all of his house and name who received it after him. And the Brahmins caused the prophecy to be written over the gates of the shrine in letters of gold.

One age followed another—and still, generation after generation, the successors of the three Brahmins watched their priceless Moonstone, night and day. One age followed another, until the first years of the eighteenth Christian century saw the reign of Aurungzebe, Emperor of the Moguls. At his command, havoc and rapine were let loose once more among the temples of the worship of Brahmah. The shrine of the four-handed god was polluted by the slaughter of sacred animals; the images of the deities were broken in pieces; and the Moonstone was seized by an officer of rank in the army of Aurungzebe.

Powerless to recover their lost treasure by

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open force, the three guardian priests followed and watched it in disguise. The generations succeeded each other; the warrior who had committed the sacrilege perished miserably; the Moonstone passed (carrying its curse with it) from one lawless Mohammedan hand to another; and still, through all chances and changes, the successors of the three guardian priests kept their watch, waiting the day when the will of Vishnu the Preserver should restore to them their sacred gem. Time rolled on from the first to the last years of the eighteenth Christian century. The Diamond fell into the possession of Tippoo, Sultan of Seringapatam, who caused it to be placed as an ornament in the handle of a dagger, and who commanded it to be kept among the choicest treasures of his armoury. Even then—in the palace of the Sultan himself—the three guardian priests still kept their watch in secret. There were three officers of Tippoo's household, strangers to the rest, who had won their master's confidence by conforming, or appearing to conform, to the Mussulman faith; and to those three men report pointed, as the three priests in disguise.

III.

So, as told in our camp, ran the fanciful story of the Moonstone. It made no serious impression on any of us except my cousin—whose love of the marvellous induced him to believe it. On the night before the assault on Seringapatam, he was absurdly angry with me, and with others, for treating the whole thing as a fable. A foolish wrangle followed; and Herncastle's unlucky temper got the better of him. He declared, in his boastful way, that we should see the Diamond on his finger, if the English army took Seringapatam. The sally was saluted by a roar of laughter, and there, as we all thought that night, the thing ended.

Let me now take you on to the day of the assault.

My cousin and I were separated at the outset. I never saw him when we forded the river; when we planted the English flag in the first breach; when we crossed the ditch beyond; and, fighting every inch of our way, entered the town. It was only at dusk, when the place was ours, and after General Baird himself had found the dead body of Tippoo under a heap of the slain, that Herncastle and I met.

We were each attached to a party sent out by the general's orders to prevent the plunder and confusion which followed our conquest. The camp-followers committed deplorable excesses; and, worse still, the soldiers found their way, by an unguarded door, into the treasury of the palace, and loaded themselves with gold and jewels. It was in the court outside the treasury that my cousin and I met, to enforce the laws of discipline on our own soldiers. Herncastle's fiery temper had been, as I could plainly see, exasperated to a kind of frenzy by the terrible slaughter through which we had passed. He was very unfit, in my opinion, to perform the duty that had been entrusted to him.

There was riot and confusion enough in the treasury, but no violence that I saw. The men (if I may use such an expression) disgraced themselves good humouredly. All sorts of rough jests and catchwords were bandied about among them; and the story of the Diamond turned up again unexpectedly, in the form of a mischievous joke. "Who's got the Moonstone?" was the rallying cry which perpetually caused the plundering, as soon as it was stopped in one place, to break out in another. While I was still vainly trying to establish order, I heard a frightful yelling on the other side of the court-yard, and at once ran towards the cries, in dread of finding some new outbreak of the pillage in that direction.

I got to an open door, and saw the bodies of two Indians (by their dress, as I guessed, officers of the palace) lying across the entrance, dead.

A cry inside hurried me into a room, which appeared to serve as an armoury. A third Indian, mortally wounded, was sinking at the feet of a man whose back was towards me. The man turned at the instant when I came in, and I saw John Herncastle, with a torch in one hand, and a dagger dripping with blood in the other. A stone, set like a pommel, in the end of the dagger's handle, flashed in the torchlight, as he turned on me, like a gleam of fire. The dying Indian sank to his knees, pointed to the dagger in Herncastle's hand, and said, in his native language:—"The Moonstone will have its vengeance yet on you and yours!" He spoke those words, and fell dead on the floor.

Before I could stir in the matter, the men who had followed me across the court-yard crowded in. My cousin rushed to meet them, like a madman. "Clear the room!" he shouted to me, "and set a guard on the door!" The men fell back as he threw himself on them with his torch and his dagger. I put two sentinels of my own company, on whom I could rely, to keep the door. Through the remainder of the night, I saw no more of my cousin.

Early in the morning, the plunder still going on, General Baird announced publicly by beat of drum, that any thief detected in the fact, be he whom he might, should be hung. The provost-marshal was in attendance, to prove that the general was in earnest; and in the throng that followed the proclamation, Herncastle and I met again.

He held out his hand, as usual, and said, "Good morning."

I waited before I gave him my hand in return.

"Tell me first," I said, "how the Indian in the armoury met his death, and what those last words meant, when he pointed to the dagger in your hand."

"The Indian met his death, as I suppose, by a mortal wound," said Herncastle. "What his last words meant I know no more than you do."

I looked at him narrowly. His frenzy of the previous day had all calmed down. I determined to give him another chance.

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"Is that all you have to tell me?" I asked.

He answered, "That is all."

I turned my back on him; and we have not spoken since.

IV.

I beg it to be understood that what I write here about my cousin (unless some necessity should arise for making it public) is for the information of the family only. Herncastle has said nothing that can justify me in speaking to our commanding officer. He has been taunted more than once about the Diamond, by those who recollect his angry outbreak before the assault; but, as may easily be imagined, his own remembrance of the circumstances under which I surprised him in the armoury has been enough to keep him silent. It is reported that he means to exchange into another regiment, avowedly for the purpose of separating himself from *me*.

Whether this be true or not, I cannot prevail upon myself to become his accuser—and I think with good reason. If I made the matter public, I have no evidence but moral evidence to bring forward. I have not only no proof that he killed the two men at the door; I cannot even declare that he killed the third man inside—for I cannot say that my own eyes saw the deed committed. It is true that I heard the dying Indian's words; but if those words were pronounced to be the ravings of delirium, how could I contradict the assertion from my own knowledge? Let our relatives, on either side, form their own opinion on what I have written, and decide for themselves whether the aversion I now feel towards this man is well or ill founded.

Although I attach no sort of credit to the fantastic Indian legend of the gem, I must acknowledge, before I conclude, that I am influenced by a certain superstition of my own in this matter. It is my conviction, or my delusion, no matter which, that crime brings its own fatality with it. I am not only persuaded of Herncastle's guilt; I am even fanciful enough to believe that he will live to regret it, if he keeps the Diamond; and that others will live to regret taking it from him, if he gives the Diamond away.

The Story.

First Period. The Loss of the Diamond (1848).

The Events related by Gabriel Betteredge, house-steward in the service of Julia, Lady Verinder.

CHAPTER I.

In the first part of Robinson Crusoe, at page one hundred and twenty-nine, you will find it thus written:

"Now I saw, though too late, the Folly of beginning a Work before we count the Cost, and before we judge rightly of our own Strength to go through with it."

Only yesterday, I opened my Robinson Crusoe at that place. Only this morning (May twenty-first, eighteen hundred and fifty), came my lady's nephew, Mr. Franklin Blake, and held a short conversation with me, as follows:

"Betteredge," says Mr. Franklin, "I have been to the lawyer's about some family matters; and, among other things, we have been talking of the loss of the Indian Diamond, in my aunt's house in Yorkshire, two years since. The lawyer thinks, as I think, that the whole story ought, in the interests of truth, to be placed on record in writing—and the sooner the better."

Not perceiving his drift yet, and thinking it always desirable, for the sake of peace and quietness, to be on the lawyer's side, I said I thought so too. Mr. Franklin went on.

"In this matter of the Diamond," he said, "the characters of innocent people have suffered under suspicion already—as you know. The memories of innocent people may suffer, hereafter, for want of a record of the facts to which those who come after us can appeal. There can be no doubt that this strange family story of ours ought to be told. And I think, Betteredge, the lawyer and I together have hit on the right way of telling it."

Very satisfactory to both of them, no doubt. But I failed to see what I myself had to do with it, so far.

"We have certain events to relate," Mr. Franklin proceeded; "and we have certain persons concerned in those events who are capable of relating them. Starting from these plain facts, the lawyer's idea is that we should all write the story of the Moonstone in turn—as far as our own personal experience extends, and no farther. We must begin by showing how the Diamond first fell into the hands of my uncle Herncastle, when he was serving in India fifty years since. This prefatory narrative I have already got by me in the form of an old family paper, which relates the necessary particulars on the authority of an eye-witness. The next thing to do is to tell how the Diamond found its way into my aunt's house in Yorkshire, two years since, and how it came to be lost in little more than twelve hours afterwards. Nobody knows as much as you do, Betteredge, about what went on in the house at that time. So you must take the pen in hand, and start the story."

In those terms I was informed of what my personal concern was with the matter of the Diamond. If you are curious to know what course I took under the circumstances, I beg to inform you that I did what you would probably have done in my place. I modestly declared myself to be quite unequal to the task imposed upon me—and I privately felt, all the time, that I was quite clever enough to perform it, if I only gave my own abilities a fair chance. Mr. Franklin, I imagine, must have seen my private sentiments in my face. He declined to believe in my modesty; and he insisted on giving my abilities a fair chance.

Two hours have passed since Mr. Franklin

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left me. As soon as his back was turned, I went to my writing-desk to start the story. There I have sat helpless (in spite of my abilities) ever since; seeing what Robinson Crusoe saw, as quoted above—namely, the folly of beginning a work before we count the cost, and before we judge rightly of our own strength to go through with it. Please to remember, I opened the book by accident, at that bit, only the day before I rashly undertook the business now in hand; and, allow me to ask—If *that* isn't prophecy, what is?

I am not superstitious; I have read a heap of books in my time; I am a scholar in my own way. Though turned seventy, I possess an active memory, and legs to correspond. You are not to take it, if you please, as the saying of an ignorant man, when I express my opinion that such a book as Robinson Crusoe never was written, and never will be written again. I have tried that book for years—generally in combination with a pipe of tobacco—and I have found it my friend in need in all the necessities of this mortal life. When my spirits are bad—Robinson Crusoe. When I want advice — Robinson Crusoe. In past times, when my wife plagued me; in present times, when I have had a drop too much—Robinson Crusoe. I have worn out six stout Robinson Crusoes with hard work in my service. On my lady's last birthday, she gave me a seventh. I took a drop too much on the strength of it; and Robinson Crusoe put me right again. Price four shillings and sixpence, bound in blue, with a picture into the bargain.

Still, this don't look much like starting the story of the Diamond—does it? I seem to be wandering off in search of Lord knows what, Lord knows where. We will take a new sheet of paper, if you please, and begin over again, with my best respects to you.

CHAPTER II.

I SPOKE of my lady a line or two back. Now the Diamond could never have been in our house, where it was lost, if it had not been made a present of to my lady's daughter; and my lady's daughter would never have been in existence to have the present, if it had not been for my lady, who (with pain and travail) produced her into the world. Consequently, if we begin with my lady, we are pretty sure of beginning far enough back. And that, let me tell you, when you have got such a job as mine in hand, is a real comfort at starting.

If you know anything of the fashionable world, you have heard tell of the three beautiful Miss Herncastles. Miss Adelaide; Miss Caroline; and Miss Julia—this last being the youngest and the best of the three sisters, in my opinion; and I had opportunities of judging, as you shall presently see. I went into the service of the old lord, their father (thank God, we have got nothing to do with *him*, in this business of the Diamond; he had the longest tongue and the shortest temper of any man, high or low, I ever met with)—I say, I went into the service of the old lord, as page-boy in waiting on the three honourable young ladies, at the age of fifteen years. There I lived, till Miss Julia married the late Sir John Verinder. An excellent man, who only wanted somebody to manage him; and, between ourselves, he found somebody to do it; and what is more, he throve on it, and grew fat on it, and lived happy and died easy on it, dating from the day when my lady took him to church to be married, to the day when she relieved him of his last breath, and closed his eyes for ever.

I have omitted to state that I went with the bride to the bride's husband's house and lands down here. "Sir John," she said, "I can't do without Gabriel Betteredge." "My lady," says Sir John, "I can't do without him, either." That was his way with her—and that was how I went into his service. It was all one to me where I went, so long as my mistress and I were together.

Seeing that my lady took an interest in the out-of-door work, and the farms, and such-like, I took an interest in them too—with all the more reason that I was a small farmer's seventh son myself. My lady got me put under the bailiff, and I did my best, and gave satisfaction, and got promotion accordingly. Some years later, on the Monday as it might be, my lady says, "Sir John, your bailiff is a stupid old man. Pension him liberally, and let Gabriel Betteredge have his place." On the Tuesday as it might be, Sir John says, "My lady, the bailiff is pensioned liberally; and Gabriel Betteredge has got his place." You hear more than enough of married people living together miserably. Here is an example to the contrary. Let it be a warning to some of you, and an encouragement to others. In the mean time, I will go on with my story.

Well, there I was in clover, you will say. Placed in a position of trust and honour, with a little cottage of my own to live in, with my rounds on the estate to occupy me in the morning, and my accounts in the afternoon, and my pipe and my Robinson Crusoe in the evening—what more could I possibly want to make me happy? Remember what Adam wanted when he was alone in the Garden of Eden; and if you don't blame it in Adam, don't blame it in me.

The woman I fixed my eye on, was the woman who kept house for me at my cottage. Her name was Selina Goby. I agree with the late William Cobbett about picking a wife. See that she chews her food well, and sets her foot down firmly on the ground when she walks, and you're all right. Selina Goby was all right in both these respects, which was one reason for marrying her. I had another reason, likewise, entirely of my own discovering. Selina, being a single woman, made me pay so much a week for her board and services. Selina, being my wife, couldn't charge for her board, and would have to give me her services for nothing. That was the point of view I looked at it from. Economy—with a dash of love. I put it to my

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mistress, as in duty bound, just as I had put it to myself.

"I have been turning Selina Goby over in my mind," I said, "and I think, my lady, it will be cheaper to marry her than to keep her."

My lady burst out laughing, and said she didn't know which to be most shocked at—my language or my principles. Some joke tickled her, I suppose, of the sort that you can't take unless you are a person of quality. Understanding nothing myself but that I was free to put it next to Selina, I went and put it accordingly. And what did Selina say? Lord! how little you must know of women, if you ask that. Of course she said Yes.

As my time drew nearer, and there got to be talk of my having a new coat for the ceremony, my mind began to misgive me. I have compared notes with other men as to what they felt while they were in my interesting situation; and they have all acknowledged that, about a week before it happened, they privately wished themselves out of it. I went a trifle further than that myself; I actually rose up, as it were, and tried to get out of it. Not for nothing! I was too just a man to expect she would let me off for nothing. Compensation to the woman when the man gets out of it, is one of the laws of England. In obedience to the laws, and after turning it over carefully in my mind, I offered Selina Goby a feather bed and fifty shillings to be off the bargain. You will hardly believe it, but it is nevertheless true—she was fool enough to refuse.

After that it was all over with me, of course. I got the new coat as cheap as I could, and I went through all the rest of it as cheap as I could. We were not a happy couple, and not a miserable couple. We were six of one and half a dozen of the other. How it was I don't understand, but we always seemed to be getting, with the best of motives, in one another's way. When I wanted to go up-stairs, there was my wife coming down; or when my wife wanted to go down, there was I coming up. That is married life, according to my experience of it.

After five years of misunderstandings on the stairs, it pleased an all-wise Providence to relieve us of each other by taking my wife. I was left with my little girl Penelope, and with no other child. Shortly afterwards Sir John died, and my lady was left with her little girl Miss Rachel, and no other child. I have written to very poor purpose of my lady, if you require to be told that my little Penelope was taken care of, under my good mistress's own eye, and was sent to school, and taught, and made a sharp girl, and promoted, when old enough, to be Miss Rachel's own maid.

As for me, I went on with my business as bailiff year after year up to Christmas, 1847, when there came a change in my life. On that day, my lady invited herself to a cup of tea alone with me in my cottage. She remarked that, reckoning from the year when I started as page-boy in the time of the old lord, I had been more than fifty years in her service, and she put into my hands a beautiful waistcoat of wool that she had worked herself, to keep me warm in the bitter winter weather.

I received this magnificent present quite at a loss to find words to thank my mistress with for the honour she had done me. To my great astonishment, it turned out, however, that the waistcoat was not an honour, but a bribe. My lady had discovered that I was getting old before I had discovered it myself, and she had come to my cottage to wheedle me (if I may use such an expression) into giving up my hard out-of-door work as bailiff, and taking my ease for the rest of my days as steward in the house. I made as good a fight of it against the indignity of taking my ease as I could. But my mistress knew the weak side of me; she put it as a favour to herself. The dispute between us ended, after that, in my wiping my eyes, like an old fool, with my new woollen waistcoat, and saying I would think about it.

The perturbation in my mind, in regard to thinking about it, being truly dreadful after my lady had gone away, I applied the remedy which I have never yet found to fail me in cases of doubt and emergency. I smoked a pipe and took a turn at Robinson Crusoe. Before I had occupied myself with that extraordinary book five minutes, I came on a comforting bit (page one hundred and fifty-eight), as follows: "To-day we love, what to-morrow we hate." I saw my way clear directly. To-day I was all for continuing to be farm-bailiff; to-morrow, on the authority of Robinson Crusoe, I should be all the other way. Take myself to-morrow while in to-morrow's humour, and the thing was done. My mind being relieved in this manner, I went to sleep that night in the character of Lady Verinder's farm-bailiff, and I woke up the next morning in the character of Lady Verinder's house-steward. All quite comfortable, and all through Robinson Crusoe!

My daughter Penelope has just looked over my shoulder to see what I have done so far. She remarks that it is beautifully written, and every word of it true. But she points out one objection. She says what I have done so far isn't in the least what I was wanted to do. I am asked to tell the story of the Diamond, and, instead of that, I have been telling the story of my own self. Curious, and quite beyond me to account for. I wonder whether the gentlemen who make a business and a living out of writing books ever find their own selves getting in the way of their subjects, like me? If they do, I can feel for them. In the mean time, here is another false start. What's to be done now? Nothing that I know of, except for you to keep your temper, and for me to begin it all over again for the third time.

CHAPTER III.

The question of how I am to start the story properly I have tried to settle in two ways. First, by scratching my head, which led to nothing. Second, by consulting my daughter Penelope, which has resulted in an entirely new idea.

Penelope's notion is that I should set down

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what happened, regularly day by day, beginning with the day when we got the news that Mr. Franklin Blake was expected on a visit to the house. When you come to fix your memory with a date in this way, it is wonderful what your memory will pick up for you upon that compulsion. The only difficulty is to fetch out the dates, in the first place. This Penelope offers to do for me by looking into her own diary, which she was taught to keep when she was at school, and which she has gone on keeping ever since. In answer to an improvement on this notion, devised by myself, namely, that she should tell the story instead of me, out of her own diary, Penelope observes, with a fierce look and a red face, that her journal is for her own private eye, and that no living creature shall ever know what is in it but herself. When I inquire what this means, Penelope says, "Fiddlestick!" *I* say, Sweethearts.

Beginning, then, on Penelope's plan, I beg to mention that I was specially called one Wednesday morning into my lady's own sitting-room, the date being the twenty-fourth of May, eighteen hundred and forty-eight.

"Gabriel," says my lady, "here is news that will surprise you. Franklin Blake has come back from abroad. He has been staying with his father in London, and he is coming to us to-morrow to stop till next month, and keep Rachel's birthday."

If I had had a hat in my hand, nothing but respect would have prevented me from throwing that hat up to the ceiling. I had not seen Mr. Franklin since he was a boy, living along with us in this house. He was, out of all sight (as I remembered him), the nicest boy that ever spun a top or broke a window. Miss Rachel, who was present, and to whom I made that remark, observed, in return, that *she* remembered him as the most atrocious tyrant that ever tortured a doll, and the hardest driver of an exhausted little girl in string harness that England could produce. "I burn with indignation, and I ache with fatigue," was the way Miss Rachel summed it up, "when I think of Franklin Blake."

Hearing what I now tell you, you will naturally ask how it was that Mr. Franklin should have passed all the years, from the time when he was a boy to the time when he was a man, out of his own country? I answer, because his father had the misfortune to be next heir to a Dukedom, and not to be able to prove it.

In two words, this was how the thing happened:

My lady's eldest sister married the celebrated Mr. Blake—equally famous for his great riches, and his great suit at law. How many years he went on worrying the tribunals of his country to turn out the Duke in possession, and to put himself in the Duke's place—how many lawyers' purses he filled to bursting, and how many otherwise harmless people he set by the ears together disputing whether he was right or wrong—is more by a great deal than I can reckon up. His wife died, and two of his three children died, before the tribunals could make up their minds to show him the door and take no more of his money. When it was all over, and the Duke in possession was left in possession, Mr. Blake discovered that the only way of being even with his country for the manner in which it had treated him, was not to let his country have the honour of educating his son. "How can I trust my native institutions," was the form in which he put it, "after the way in which my native institutions have behaved to *me*?" Add to this, that Mr. Blake disliked all boys, his own included, and you will admit that it could only end in one way. Master Franklin was taken from us in England, and was sent to institutions which his father *could* trust, in that superior country, Germany; Mr. Blake himself, you will observe, remaining snug in England, to improve his fellow-countrymen in the Parliament House, and to publish a statement on the subject of the Duke in possession, which has remained an unfinished statement from that day to this.

There! Thank God, that's told! Neither you nor I need trouble our heads any more about Mr. Blake, senior. Leave him to the Dukedom; and let you and I stick to the Diamond.

The Diamond takes us back to Mr. Franklin, who was the innocent means of bringing that unlucky jewel into the house.

Our nice boy didn't forget us after he went abroad. He wrote every now and then; sometimes to my lady, sometimes to Miss Rachel, and sometimes to me. We had had a transaction together, before he left, which consisted in his borrowing of me a ball of string, a four-bladed knife, and seven and sixpence in money—the colour of which last I have not seen, and never expect to see, again. His letters to me chiefly related to borrowing more. I heard, however, from my lady, how he got on abroad, as he grew in years and stature. After he had learnt what the institutions of Germany could teach him, he gave the French a turn next, and the Italians a turn after that. They made him among them a sort of universal genius, as well as I could understand it. He wrote a little; he painted a little; he sang and played and composed a little—borrowing, as I suspect, in all these cases, just as he had borrowed from me. His mother's fortune (seven hundred a year) fell to him when he came of age, and ran through him, as it might be through a sieve. The more money he had, the more he wanted: there was a hole in Mr. Franklin's pocket that nothing would sew up. Wherever he went, the lively easy way of him made him welcome. He lived here, there, and everywhere; his address (as he used to put it himself) being, "Post-office, Europe—to be left till called for." Twice over, he made up his mind to come back to England and see us; and twice over (saving your presence), some unmentionable woman stood in the way and stopped him. His third attempt succeeded, as you know already from what my lady told me. On Tuesday, the twenty-fifth of May, we were to see for the first time what our nice boy had grown to be as a man. He came of good blood; he had a high courage; and he was five-and-

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twenty years of age, by our reckoning. Now you know as much of Mr. Franklin Blake as I did—before Mr. Franklin Blake came down to our house.

The Thursday was as fine a summer's day as ever you saw: and my lady and Miss Rachel (not expecting Mr. Franklin till dinner-time) drove out to lunch with some friends in the neighbourhood.

When they were gone, I went and had a look at the bedroom which had been got ready for our guest, and saw that all was straight. Then, being butler in my lady's establishment as well as steward (at my own particular request, mind, and because it vexed me to see anybody but myself in possession of the key of the late Sir John's cellar)—then, I say, I fetched up some of our famous Latour claret, and set it in the warm summer air to take off the chill before dinner. Concluding to set myself in the warm summer air next—seeing that what is good for old claret is equally good for old age—I took up my beehive chair to go out into the back court, when I was stopped by hearing a sound like the soft beating of a drum on the terrace in front of my lady's residence.

Going round to the terrace, I found three mahogany-coloured Indians, in white linen frocks and trousers, looking up at the house.

The Indians, as I saw on looking closer, had small hand-drums slung in front of them. Behind them stood a little delicate-looking light-haired English boy carrying a bag. I judged the fellows to be strolling conjurors, and the boy with the bag to be carrying the tools of their trade. One of the three, who spoke English, and who exhibited, I must own, the most elegant manners, presently informed me that my judgment was right. He requested permission to show his tricks in the presence of the lady of the house.

Now I am not a sour old man. I am generally all for amusement, and the last person in the world to distrust another person because he happens to be a few shades darker than myself. But the best of us have our weaknesses—and my weakness, when I know a family plate-basket to be out on a pantry table, is to be instantly reminded of that basket by the sight of a strolling stranger whose manners are superior to my own. I accordingly informed the Indian that the lady of the house was out; and I warned him and his party off the premises. He made me a beautiful bow in return; and he and his party went off the premises. On my side, I returned to my beehive chair, and set myself down on the sunny side of the court, and fell (if the truth must be owned), not exactly into a sleep, but into the next best thing to it.

I was roused up by my daughter Penelope, running out at me as if the house was on fire. What do you think she wanted? She wanted to have the three Indian jugglers instantly taken up; for this reason, namely, that they knew who was coming from London to visit us, and that they meant some mischief to Mr. Franklin Blake.

Mr. Franklin's name roused me. I opened my eyes, and made my girl explain herself.

It appeared that Penelope had just come from our lodge, where she had been having a gossip with the lodge-keeper's daughter. The two girls had seen the Indians pass out, after I had warned them off, followed by their little boy. Taking it into their heads that the boy was ill used by the foreigners—for no reason that I could discover, except that he was pretty and delicate-looking—the two girls had stolen along the inner side of the hedge between us and the road, and had watched the proceedings of the foreigners on the outer side. Those proceedings resulted in the performance of the following extraordinary tricks.

They first looked up the road, and down the road, and made sure that they were alone. Then they all three faced about, and stared hard in the direction of our house. Then they jabbered and disputed in their own language, and looked at each other like men in doubt. Then they all turned to their little English boy, as if they expected *him* to help them. And then the chief Indian, who spoke English, said to the boy, "Hold out your hand."

On hearing those dreadful words, my daughter Penelope said she didn't know what prevented her heart from flying straight out of her. I thought privately that it might have been her stays. All I said, however, was, "You make my flesh creep." (*Nota bene*: women like these little compliments.)

Well, when the Indian said "Hold out your hand," the boy shrunk back, and shook his head, and said he didn't like it. The Indian thereupon asked him (not at all unkindly) whether he would like to be sent back to London, and left where they had found him, sleeping in an empty basket in a market—a hungry, ragged, and forsaken little boy. This, it seems, ended the difficulty. The little chap unwillingly held out his hand. Upon that, the Indian took a bottle from his bosom, and poured out of it some black stuff, like ink, into the palm of the boy's hand. The Indian—first touching the boy's head, and making signs over it in the air—then said, "Look." The boy became quite stiff, and stood like a statue, looking into the ink in the hollow of his hand.

(So far, it seemed to me to be juggling, accompanied by a foolish waste of ink. I was beginning to feel sleepy again, when Penelope's next words stirred me up.)

The Indians looked up the road and down the road once more—and then the chief Indian said these words to the boy: "See the English gentleman from foreign parts."

The boy said, "I see him."

The Indian said, "Is it on the road to this house, and on no other, that the English gentleman will travel to-day?"

The boy said, "It is on the road to this house, and on no other, that the English gentleman will travel to-day."

The Indian put a second question—after waiting a little first. He said: "Has the English gentleman got It about him?"

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The boy answered—also, after waiting a little first—"Yes."

The Indian put a third and last question: "Will the English gentleman come here, as he has promised to come, at the close of day?"

The boy said, "I can't tell."

The Indian asked why.

The boy said, "I am tired. The mist rises in my head, and puzzles me. I can see no more to-day."

With that, the catechism ended. The chief Indian said something in his own language to the other two, pointing to the boy, and pointing towards the town, in which (as we afterwards discovered) they were lodged. He then, after making more signs on the boy's head, blew on his forehead, and so woke him up with a start. After that, they all went on their way towards the town, and the girls saw them no more.

Most things, they say, have a moral, if you only look for it. What was the moral of this?

The moral was, as I thought: First, that the chief juggler had heard Mr. Franklin's arrival talked of among the servants out-of-doors, and saw his way to making a little money by it. Second, that he and his men and boy (with a view to making the said money) meant to hang about till they saw my lady drive home, and then to come back, and foretel Mr. Franklin's arrival by magic. Third, that Penelope had heard them rehearsing their hocus-pocus, like actors rehearsing a play. Fourth, that I should do well to have an eye, that evening, on the plate-basket. Fifth, that Penelope would do well to cool down, and leave me, her father, to doze off again in the sun.

That appeared to me to be the sensible view. If you know anything of the ways of young women, you won't be surprised to hear that Penelope wouldn't take it. The moral of the thing was serious, according to my daughter. She particularly reminded me of the Indian's third question, Has the English gentleman got It about him? "Oh, father!" says Penelope, clasping her hands, "don't joke about this! What does 'It' mean?"

"We'll ask Mr. Franklin, my dear," I said, "if you can wait till Mr. Franklin comes." I winked to show I meant that in joke. Penelope took it quite seriously. My girl's earnestness tickled me. "What on earth should Mr. Franklin know about it?" I inquired. "Ask him," says Penelope. "And see whether *he* thinks it a laughing matter, too." With that parting shot, my daughter left me.

I settled it with myself, when she was gone, that I really would ask Mr. Franklin—mainly to set Penelope's mind at rest. What was said between us, when I did ask him, later on that same day, you will find set out fully in its proper place. But as I don't wish to raise your expectations and then disappoint them, I will take leave to warn you here—before we go any further—that you won't find the ghost of a joke in our conversation on the subject of the jugglers. To my great surprise, Mr. Franklin, like Penelope, took the thing seriously. How seriously, you will understand when I tell you that, in his opinion, "It" meant the Moonstone.

RAILWAY THOUGHTS.

The pursuit of health is like hunting the hare: the further you run, and the faster you run after her, the more you enjoy and benefit by the sport. I hold that there is more health to be derived by continuous travelling than by merely shifting your place of abode. Thus, if I occupy a week in going to John o'Groat's house and back, I derive more benefit than if I performed the journey in a couple of days—supposing that to be possible—and spent the other five at John o'Groat's house. There are, so to speak, elements in railway travelling highly conducive to health, more especially to the health of those whose pursuits are habitually in-door and sedentary. Those elements are excitement, variety, an occasional sense of danger, followed by a sense of safety—though this does not always follow—and fresh air. To the sedentary man, who has been spending months, as it were, in his easy-chair, there is a great amount of exhilaration in being suddenly transferred to an express train. The very bustle of the railway terminus is a taste of new life. It is the first glass or two of wine at dinner. When the train is at full speed rattling through the green fields — champaign country as they might be called in this connexion—you become hilarious. Of course, a man may take too much railway travelling, just as he may take too much champagne. Use and abuse are much the same in both cases. Two or three glasses of champagne—perfect happiness; a bottle—heaviness of breathing, thickness of speech, and a disposition towards prostration. A hundred miles by rail—very pleasant, very appetising; five hundred, and you are a dead dog. Nothing but a long night's rest will restore you after that heavy bout of enjoyment on the rail. The only temporary picker-up, that has any effect whatever, is a warm bath. But there is a medium in all things, in railway travelling as well as in drinking; and I repeat, that I consider a week or so on the railway, when you don't take too much at a sitting, to be a very wholesome and enjoyable thing. It clears the lungs, circulates the blood, stimulates the brain, and raises the spirits. I believe it is a good thing to mix your airs, and to mix them well and thoroughly. "Never mix your liquors," is an exploded fallacy. I have it on the authority of a toper of many years' (unsteady) standing, that it is the greatest mistake in the world to stick to one liquor.

"Be warned by my example, young man," says the old toper. "I have never gone to bed, what you might call sober, for fifty years; and look at me!—I can get drunk yet, and

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never feel a bit the worse. I got drunk before you were born, and I'll get drunk after you're dead. And for why? Because I've always mixed my liquors. The various spirituous liquors mercifully given to man—and there are but four of them, corresponding to the elements of which all things are composed—are gin, whisky, rum, and brandy, and each is a corrective of the other. Each is a poison, I grant you, just as each component part of the atmosphere is a poison. It won't do to breathe nothing but hydrogen; it won't do to drink nothing but gin. With regard to liquor, this is my practice: I drink brandy for a week, then I correct the evil tendency of brandy by drinking gin for the next week. Following this out, I correct the gin with rum, and the rum with whisky. In a month I come round to the brandy again."

As a triumphant proof that his system is infallible, my friend points to the fact that he has seen all the companions of his life "go under" both table and turf because they were faithful to a foolish maxim, and wouldn't mix their liquors.

I am a great believer in this theory as applied to air. If you want to keep up a pleasant state of exhilaration, and preserve your health, mix your airs. For this reason I have faith in the sanitary virtues of railway travelling. John o'Groat's house or the Land's End may be all very well, but the air may not suit you at either place; and when you fix your quarters you are apt to settle down into the habitual easy-chair, and to live much as you do at home, whereas on the railway you breathe a hundred airs in a day. Believing in the inspirating influence of air with variations, I resolved to spend my month's holiday, this autumn, in travelling, and to visit as many places as possible, never spending more than a day or a couple of days at each.

So one morning, making a great effort, I dug myself from my arm-chair, and transferred my indolent and torpid person to the platform of the terminus at Euston. (There is no necessity to add "square," or to make mention of the London and North-Western Railway; for "Euston" is as big a word, and as well known a place, as London. Indeed, if you wish your luggage labelled at, say Bonar Bridge, further north than which British railway goeth not, you need only say, "Euston." For all railway purposes in these distant northern regions, the whole of the great metropolis is swallowed up in "Euston" and "King's Cross.") The very first step that one takes towards a railway journey is exciting. The cab is at the door (you see how modest I am; I don't say "carriage"), and you have not a minute to spare. Then comes that violent and bewildering collision of thoughts, to which an indolent man is always liable at such moments.

Is my luggage ready? Have I got everything I want—my railway guide, the sandwiches, the brandy-flask, my cigar-case, fuzees? Have I locked up the valuables? Have I any small change? With these unsatisfied doubts tumbling over each other in your brain, you scramble into the cab, and the excitement begins.

There is certainly no more lively, bustling, animated, and animating scene than the terminus of a railway on the departure of an express train. It does one good even to be an on-looker; and I can imagine that a man, who has few opportunities of travel, might give himself a pleasant excitement every day, by visiting the nearest terminus to witness the excitement of others. In this ingenious manner I have enjoyed some of the delights of travelling, without the weariness of a journey, and without paying a fare. It would be difficult to describe what it is that renders this scene so invigorating. There seems to be a sort of animal magnetism at work. Every one is excited, though there is no particular cause for excitement. There are plenty of carriages, there are full five minutes to spare, and yet every individual on the platform is in an intense hurry—passing and repassing, darting at the book-stall, plunging into the refreshment-room, peeping into the carriages, glancing at the clock, asking questions of the guards (who are passing up and down with their hands slyly formed into money-boxes), giving directions to porters, shaking hands with friends over and over again, and, if addicted to tobacco, making the most desperate efforts to avoid the company of ladies. No doubt the snorting of the iron horse adds to the excitement. He is not in the least impatient to be off, and yet he seems so. And what a sense of isolation and almost sadness follows, when the train moves out of the station, and you find yourself quietly seated with three or four companions! Those whom you have left on the platform feel no less isolated and sad than you, who are gliding away, with the elements of all the past bustle gathered into silence. I am inclined to think that something new might be said even on such a hackneyed, every-hour subject as a railway journey from London to Liverpool, if the thoughtful passenger had the courage to reveal his thoughts and his feelings. I often wonder if the people who sit in the same compartment with me are thinking what I am thinking, feeling what I am feeling. Much as I am benefited by railway travelling, I will confess at once that I never enter a railway carriage without making up my mind for sudden death. In an express train I can never for any length of time abstract myself from thoughts of danger. And yet I am not agitated physically by this fear. My heart beats as usual; there is no pallor on my cheek, no moisture on my skin. I can speak without a quaver in my voice; I can smoke placidly. Nevertheless, at every variation of sound and motion, every shriek of the whistle, every plunge into the darkness of a tunnel, every swaying, swinging rattle over the points at a junction, thick-coming fancies of danger rush through my brain and trouble me vaguely. I look into the faces of my fellow-passengers for some indication that they are feeling as I feel. I can

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see none. But, as I am sure that I betray nothing to them, I reason that they, like myself, may be suffering without showing it.

Exhilarating and refreshing as I find railway travelling to be in its result upon my health and spirits, there are variations in sound and motion attending an express train at full speed that cause me, for the time being, much uneasiness. How does it happen that after travelling smoothly and steadily for a certain distance, the carriage suddenly begins to oscillate, that the wheels begin to "bump, bump," as if the axles had given way, that every now and then a "birring" noise occurs, that the carriage sinks first on one side and then on the other for a short distance, as if it were going to roll over? These may not be indications of danger, but I shrewdly suspect that the travelling public think they are; and I am sure it would be conferring a great favour upon the travelling public, and tend greatly to relieve their minds and make them more comfortable during their journeys, if some person who has a railway engineer's experience of all such disturbing symptoms, would tell us precisely what they mean. Are they danger signals, or not? As a timid railway traveller—though, I suspect, no more timid than thousands of my neighbours—I want to know what circumstance will, and what circumstance will not, justify me in breaking that circular piece of glass, turning the handle, and signalling to the driver to stop. Shall I be warranted when that unaccountable bumping goes on for a full hour? when I am being flung about in my seat as if I were being rolled down hill in a barrel? when the carriage is filled with the smoke and the smell of burning wood? when red-hot sparks are fairly raining on the heap of tarpaulin-covered luggage on the roof? If there is no danger whatever indicated by these alarming signs and wonders of railway travelling, only let us know and be assured of it on the best authority.

I have a suspicion that these questions would have been frequently asked before now but for the unwillingness of railway travellers to confess fears which might prove to be groundless. When travellers get safely to their destination, they forget the alarms of the journey, and neglect the resolution which they made on the way to write to the Times. It is only when an accident occurs that passengers have courage enough to declare, after the fact, that they felt something was going wrong.

I wonder if there is any one railway functionary who has a full knowledge of *all* the ways and habits of a train? I am certain that the engine-driver knows very little of what occurs behind him. The engine is subject to little variation of motion. Its oscillation is a continuance of short sharp jerks, as regular as the ticking of a watch. If the road be clear, and the metals sound, nothing can happen to the engine except a collision. But the long trains that swing behind it are, as we know, apt to run off the line, tear up the rails, and force the points from their proper position. Would it be too much to ask the railway authorities to draw up a code of railway engineering, which should not only be a guide to those who drive engines and manage railway traffic, but also afford every necessary information to travellers? Very few know what degree of safety is ensured by the principle of running upon rails. There may be none at all. We take the railway upon blind trust. People have travelled upon railways without being killed or maimed: others may do the same. I should not wonder if, on investigating the subject, it were found that it is not safe *at all* to travel at the rate of forty miles an hour, and that it is quite as foolhardy to enter an express train as it is to trust oneself to the shoulders of Blondin when he walks across the high rope. Let me recommend the subject to the consideration of the Social Science Congress.

The perils which I imagine on the journey between Euston, London, and Lime-street, Liverpool, present themselves so uniformly, that I think they may be accounted for. My experience is this: That the long run at express speed from Euston to Rugby is invariably easy and pleasant. No swinging or jolting, nor any unpleasant motion whatever. But towards the end of the journey the engine appears to get fiercely impatient, and tears along at an alarming rate. I never pass the points at Huyton, three miles from the Lime-street tunnel, without feeling that there is going to be a smash—that we shall swing off the line. Again, on returning, all goes smoothly and steadily until the train leaves Rugby for its final run to Euston. Here the engine goes mad again, and in the neighbourhood of Tring I sit breathlessly expecting destruction. I have heard engine-drivers talk about "up hill" and "down hill," in reference to this part of the line. Is it down hill from Tring, and is it safe to go down hill at such a fearful rate? I could name many "bits of road," as the drivers have it, where the engines invariably go mad. On the Great Northern, between Doncaster and Peterborough: two hours of breathless holding on by arm-strap and cushion. Between Watford and King's Cross—ditto. The madness of the Midland trains, as the public know, has driven passengers to break their journey to escape the risks of breaking their necks. I have often felt inclined to do this, but did not like to confess my alarm.

The engine-driver of Mugby Junction, who, I am in a position to state, bears his fame with that quiet modesty which is ever characteristic of real worth, said that there was an art in driving; that though starting an engine was as simple and easy a matter as drawing a drop of gin, driving well and steadily was quite another affair. I have taken some pains to ascertain the correctness of this dictum, and I find that there is at least a great difference in the performance of engines. Whether this is owing to the engines themselves, or to the drivers of them, I am unable to say; but I have noticed frequently that a change of engine, without any other change in the train, such as

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the addition or detachment of carriages, has made a sensible difference in the motion of the train. One engine (or engine-driver, it may be) jolts and jerks and swings you about; another comes on, and you go along smoothly. Why cannot we always go along smoothly?

Habitual travellers on the London and North-Western Railway are apt to say that the journey from Euston to Lime-street presents no features of interest. Now, my experience warrants me in saying that there is at least one feature which never fails to interest the traveller. There are places on the line whose names are household words, places associated with great names and great deeds. Here is Harrow, for example, where so many famous poets and illustrious statesmen went to school; Rugby, another famous seat of learning; Mugby, also, known to the world for its stale buns. The names of Oxford, Tamworth, and Chester might awaken historical thoughts to beguile the tedium of the journey. But the place of interest, par excellence, is none of these. The magic name which rouses every traveller when it is uttered, which even engages his mind before it comes in sight, is RUGELEY. I have travelled very many times between London and Liverpool, but I never once passed this place without thinking, or being reminded, of it. Second class invariably points to the square-towered church in the distance, and says, "Yonder's Rugeley, where Palmer murdered Cook." First class, being more dignified and less communicative, is not betrayed into any remark; but as the train approaches the place you see that he is watching for something. Going towards Liverpool it is always "eyes left" in passing Rugeley. Second class moralises aloud; first class moralises in thought:

"I wonder if he ever went to that church; if he prayed there when he was giving Cook the poison. What must have been his feelings when the clergyman said, 'Thou shalt do no murder;' when he came to say, 'From battle and murder and sudden death, good Lord, deliver us'?"

"Here's the station," continues second class. "I dare say he and Cook have often stood there together, waiting for the train to Doncaster races."

"Ah," says another second class, "many's the time they've taken a glass together in that refreshment-room."

"And here's Stafford, where he was tried and hanged."

And then comes up the controversy as to whether or not it was strychnine he used.

There is nothing which interests mankind so deeply as a murder. It is mere cant in superior people to deplore the predilection of the lower classes for that part of the newspaper which contains the record of crime. Superior people are quite as eager as their inferiors to turn to the history of dark deeds. It is not surprising. Murder is the most awful of all crimes. The most vulgar deed of this kind derives importance from the sacredness which we all attach to human life. The commonest outcast, whose throat is cut darkly and mysteriously in some low lodging-house, receives from the awful circumstance of the crime something of the halo which surrounds the martyr. Nothing else that could happen to such a person could ever elevate him to the importance which he receives from being murdered. The murder of Mr. O'Connor by Mrs. Manning is by no means a burlesque of the murder of King Duncan by Lady Macbeth. It is the same thing. The vulgar surroundings of the cellar at Bermondsey do not render the deed less awful or less tragic. In both cases it is the violent taking of a sacred life. There is something solemn in the very sound of the words, "the murdered man." Solemnity falls upon the voice when we say "the dead man;" but "murdered" takes a deeper, graver tone. No places are so well remembered as those where murders have been committed. Our travelling guide never fails to point out the murder-spots, and no one ever forgets those spots. They burn themselves into the mind the instant we see them. We forget all else that we have seen during the day, though we may have gazed on things the like of which we have never set eyes upon before. The murder-spot—though but a mean room, a heap of stones, or the root of a tree—remains as vivid as fire.

No wonder then that Rugeley church should arouse so much interest, since it suggests a subject which so nearly concerns all mankind. The train of thought here is shunted upon rails which carry it back to the gates of Paradise, the scene of the first murder.

And so we come to Luyton, the little station outside Liverpool, where the train always stops when Lord Derby is in it, and where a cheerful gentleman, fresh from an eight miles' ride, comes in to allay your nervousness by telling you that, in going down the tunnel, the train once broke the rope, dashed through the station wall, rushed across Lime-street, and ran full butt against St. George's Hall, Liverpool. What a relief to arrive without running full butt! How brave and jolly you become the moment you step on the platform! How well you feel!—what an appetite you have! You forget to write to the Times about the jolting, and swinging, and the madness of the engine.

TREASURE.

Two youthful schoolmates, blithe and free,
Wander'd together by the sea.

Said one, "My hopes are high as heaven;
To me the Future shall be given."

Said his companion, "I will stand
Among the foremost of the land.

"My fame shall thread the maze of men,
And lightnings quiver from my pen."

They met again in forty years,
And told their boyish hopes and fears.

The one had set his heart on gold,
And found it—growing frail and old.

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The other, living fuller life,
Had fled the haunts of worldly strife,

And fill'd his soul with purpose high
And wisdom of the earth and sky,

But had not gather'd golden store,
To scare ill-fortune from his door;

Nothing but Courage, Hope, and Faith,
And Love, the conqueror of Death.

The rich man, with a mournful smile,
Said to the poor, and sigh'd the while:

"Oh, friend! thou'st dream'd thy life away,
And now that thou art old and grey,

"Hast not a penny for thine age,
Or for thy children's heritage."

The poor man cheerily replied:
"What matters? Life and joy abide.

"My children, sporting in the sun,
Can do at least what I have done.

"I've had my pleasure as I went,
And known the riches of content.

"Thou hast thy treasures—I have mine—
My heart my judge, men's verdict thine.

"But, friend, who'st chosen other ways
Than those I've trodden all my days,

"When comes the hour, as come it must,
When thou shalt mingle with the dust,

"Whose treasures shall the best endure—
Those of the rich man or the poor?

"Thine cease at portals of the grave,
Not even their shadow can'st thou save!

"But what I've won with heart endeavour
Is mine for ever and for ever.

"I take it with me through the tomb,
And find it when I pass the gloom!"

SIR JOHN'S TROUBLES.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III.

WANTED A GOVERNESS. Must be a Roman Catholic. A French lady with a good knowledge of English preferred. Unexceptional references required; and a liberal salary given. Apply by letter to J. M., the Oriental Club, Hanover-square, W.

"What a very singular place for a governess to apply at," said Lady Milson to her husband, as she read the above advertisement in the Morning Post at breakfast one morning. "What a curious place for a governess to apply at. Why, the initials are the same as your own, John."

It was fortunate for Sir John that two walls of paper intervened between him and his wife, for he sat reading the Homeward Mail, and Lady Milson the Morning Post, as they sipped their tea and made inroads into their toast. Had it been otherwise, his better-half would have certainly seen that there was something wrong with her lord and master. Poor Sir John's troubles had begun, as he thought, in earnest, but as yet it was only the beginning of evil. He had written to tell his old friend that he would do all he could for his daughters when they arrived, and would have a home ready for them by the time they arrived. But what to do, or how to do it, he knew no more than a babe unborn. Already he had been more than suspected of wanting a house for some person for whom he ought not to find either house or home. He had gone to a West-end house-agent, and told him that he required, somewhere in the neighbourhood of London, a villa with three best bedrooms, a dining-room and drawing-room, and suitable for a small establishment. The agent "yes, Sir Johned," and "no, Sir Johned," and "you may depend upon my getting you the very thing you require, Sir Johned" him, until he felt inclined to knock him down upon the spot and run away. But when poor Sir John began to give very particular directions that all letters on the subject of this villa were to be sent to him at his club, and not to his house, the man's countenance spread into something as near a grin as a respectable tradesman could allow himself to indulge in. "You may trust to me, Sir John," he exclaimed. "I *perfectly* understand, Sir John. You may rest assured that your confidence shall be respected." And with this there came over the fellow's eyelid something approaching so near to a wink, that Sir John felt in a greater rage than ever, and walked off muttering anything but prayers, "for all the world as if he were a Hindian bashaw," as the house-agent expressed himself afterwards when speaking of the interview to a friend. At last—and with the utmost secresy, as if he really was doing something which he ought not—he got a suitable house in the new part of Kensington, which he took at a rent of seventy-five pounds a year. Of course the agreement for the house had to be made out in his name, for he had not yet engaged the governess who was to rule over the establishment. Sir John had been a householder in London for four or five years, and his name was, of course, in the Blue Book, the Court Guide, and the Post-office Directory. A reference to any of these books showed that he lived in a house for which he must pay at least four hundred per annum rent. From what he told the house-agent, the house he hired was intended for another person or persons, and yet it was to be taken in his name. Moreover, he wore such a very decided air of being ashamed—or, more correctly speaking, perhaps, of being frightened—of what he was doing, that it was hardly to be wondered at if house-agents thought there was something out of the way—something that was anything but all right—in the transaction. One of these gentry, in fact, as good as told him as much. "You see, Sir John," he said, "I don't mind speaking out. The landlord of that house don't want, he don't, to let any promiscuous party like, 'ave 'is 'ouse. The neighbourhood is most 'spectable, and you see, Sir John, as how if he lets any party live in that house, which is a

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lady without a husband like, why, you see, the valer like would go down, it would. Not but what *you* is most 'spectable, Sir John, and if you wished the 'ouse for Lady Milson it would be quite another affair. But the landlord, he don't like letting parties that has not got a name like, 'aving 'is 'ouse. You'll 'scuse me, Sir John, but if you took a look round St. John Wood's way, I think you would be more like to soot yourself." It is hardly necessary to say that Sir John did *not* "take a look St. John Wood's way," and that he did not trouble that house-agent any further.

But even with the house secured were his troubles ended? By no means. He asked his tailor—he was half afraid and half ashamed to ask any of his friends—where he could get a small house furnished throughout, and the snip smiled, and, in recommending him to an upholsterer, said, "I *quite* understand what you mean, Sir John." And when he went to see the upholsterer, the miscreant behaved in exactly the same way. "Quite so, Sir John. I see *exactly* what you wish, Sir John. A ten-roomed house, furnished neatly, and with every luxury. I did the same for Lord Epsom last week, Sir John. A matter, I should say, of four hundred pounds, or it may be a trifle more." And the fellow smiled a knowing smile, as much as to say, "*I* know all about it, but you are quite safe in *my* hands."

At last the house at Kensington was got and furnished, but as yet the governess had not been engaged; although, if all went well, the "old gunner's" daughters might be expected at Southampton in about six weeks. Not that there were no answers to the advertisement which heads this chapter. On the contrary, there were many; but the difficulty was how or where to see those ladies whose references and antecedents made them at all eligible for the situation. One lady, writing to "J. M., at the Oriental Club," said that she was forty-five years of age, that she was a Frenchwoman, had a good knowledge of English, was a Roman Catholic, and had been a governess for twelve years, during which time she had lived in three families, and that she could give references to her last situation, which was in Lord Eastcheap's family, she having only left his lordship's daughters when the last of them had gone out in the world. This was an opportunity which Sir John would at once have seized upon, but that the very excellence of the references debarred him from so doing. He knew Lord and Lady Eastcheap very well. He knew that their three daughters were exceedingly well-brought-up girls, and he was perfectly certain that any governess recommended by that family would be exactly the sort of person to whom, of all others, he would like to entrust his old friend's daughters. But he could not take any steps in the matter. He felt quite certain that if he wrote or spoke to either Lord or Lady Eastcheap on the subject, that either one or the other would speak to Lady Milson the first time they met, and ask whether Sir John's friends had engaged the governess that had lived in their family. Thus, in the same way that his own respectability made it difficult for him to hire a house without others believing that he was doing those things which he ought not to have done, the good reference of this governess made it all the more difficult for him to engage her. Then, again, the advertisement which he had put in the Post not unnaturally attracted the attention of some of the old boys at the Oriental; and Clogson, formerly accountant-general in Orissa, offered the hall porter a sovereign to tell him who "J. M." was. That functionary, to his honour be it said, did not betray Sir John, and declared that he did not know anything about the letters. But Clogson was not to be put off. He watched day after day in the hall of the club, until he saw Sir John Milson take up the little packet of letters addressed in ladies' handwriting to "J. M.," and then he commenced a series of mild jokes about "sly dogs," of married men having their little weaknesses, and of "nice goings on which men's wives ought to be told of," until poor Sir John was driven half mad, and almost made a vow that he would go off to the Land's End, and leave the young ladies to shift for themselves when they arrived in England. At last he succeeded in hearing of a lady whom he thought would suit, and whose reference was to a lady in the north of England, of whom neither he nor his wife knew anything. Moreover, the reference proved most satisfactory; and so, after dodging about for some days—giving the governess appointments in confectioners' shops, in railway waiting-rooms, and in all sorts of odd out-of-the-way places—he engaged her, and duly installed her in the small house at Kensington, there to await the arrival of her future pupils.

But before the advent of those young ladies, poor Sir John got into trouble, for the first time in his married life, with his wife. Lady Milson had a sort of unattached female aide-de-camp, who came and went to and from the house like a tame dog. This was a lady somewhat advanced in years, whose husband had once been "a highly respectable merchant in the City," but who was now bankrupt in business, insolvent in purse, and broken down in spirit. Mrs. Morris had become acquainted with Annie at some "Ladies' - Poor - District - Visiting - Aid Society's" meeting, and had impressed the rich Anglo-Indian's wife with a feeling of compassion for Mr. Morris's poverty. Owing to Lady Milson's representations, Sir John had used his interest to obtain appointments in the Indian public works and telegraph departments for Mr. Morris's two sons, and in return for his kindness Mrs. Morris had by degrees worked herself into being a sort of private secretary, and public toady of Annie. Like all ladies who have lived much in India, the latter was terribly wanting in energy, and was only too glad to be saved trouble by an unpaid lady "help," who took messages to her dressmaker, found out where the best and cheapest tea was

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to be had, checked her tradesmen's books, and wrote her cards of invitation, all for the sake of an occasional lift in her ladyship's carriage, and the pleasure of talking to her friends in Holloway about her "dear friend Lady Milson." Sir John hated Mrs. Morris. She was always in his way. If he wanted to have a quiet evening at home, he was sure to find, on coming back from the club at seven o'clock, that Mrs. Morris had invited herself—or had remained so late that Lady Milson could not help asking her—to remain to dinner, when her thin sour face and her fawning manner to his wife made his wine taste hot, and his soup feel cold. Mrs. Morris had quite wit enough to see that, although Annie liked her for petty services rendered, Sir John hated her, and that were it not for this she would have been asked much oftener to the house—that is, asked in a more gratifying and substantial manner; for, as it was, she went there often enough, but in a back-stairs sort of way. Knowing as she did that Sir John disliked her, she determined, if ever opportunity offered, to create a misunderstanding between him and his wife. The occasion came sooner than she had dared to hope for. Going one morning to an Oxford-street shop to match some silk for Lady Milson, Mrs. Morris thought fit at luncheon-time to turn into that well-known place of refreshment for ladies a few doors on the Pantheon side of the Circus. When she entered, there were, as usual, several persons busy with the business of luncheon, and amongst them, seated at one of the small tables, was Sir John, in earnest conversation with a lady. The gentleman did not see his wife's toady, and the latter took a seat behind him, where she could hear all that was passing, without herself being seen. To her intense disgust, she found that Sir John and the lady were talking in French, of which language she did not understand a single word, and, therefore, all her manœuvres to find out what they were speaking about were in vain. She was not, however, to be put off aiming the blow she intended at Sir John, and that very evening told Lady Milson that she had seen her husband in close confab with a young and very good-looking lady who spoke in French. The governess was fifty if she was a day, and "plain at that," as an American backwoodsman would say. Annie had never in her life felt what it was to be jealous, for Sir John had never given her the slightest occasion for being so. At first she would not believe a word of what Mrs. Morris told her. Her husband was fifty-six years of age; they had been married more than a quarter of a century; was it likely that at his age he would make appointments to meet ladies at confectioners' shops? She told her toady that there must be some mistake, and that it was impossible that the gentleman she saw could have been Sir John. But Mrs. Morris insisted upon her story being true, and so at last Annie half believed her. That evening Sir John happened to be dining with some old Indian brother-officers at the club, and did not come home until Mrs. Morris had left his house. When he returned, his wife told him what she had heard, but in a sort of half-joking way, as if she did not quite believe it, which she did not. Sir John was too old a soldier to fly when he knew the enemy was behind him, so he put a bold face on the affair, and declared that it was quite true. An elderly lady, he said, had spoken to him in Oxford-street, and asked him in French how she could find her way back to Islington, from whence she had come. She did not speak a word of English, and so he had taken her into the confectioner's, ordered her some refreshment, procured her a cab, and then sent her on her way rejoicing. The next time he saw his enemy, he asked her why she had not come forward and spoken to him in the luncheon-room, and Mrs. Morris saw that for this time at any rate she was checkmated.

But Sir John's troubles, or rather his fear of troubles and scandal, did not end here. Before long it became perfectly known in the neighbourhood of the house he had taken who it was that had rented the place, and, accordingly, prospectuses and cards from cheap furniture shops, from wine-merchants, coal-merchants, grocers, butchers, bakers, livery-stable keepers, and every sort and condition of tradesman, came pouring in upon him. Some of these were sent to his club, others to his house, and Annie wondered not a little why shopkeepers in South Kensington should all of a sudden want to supply goods to a house in Tyburnia, or why those persons should imagine that she was going to change her tradesmen. How often Sir John anathematised the absurd whim of his friend, who had enjoined him that no one, not even Annie, should be told the secret of the two girls coming home! All day and every day he was in fever—not that Lady Milson should discover all about the girls, for nothing would have pleased him better if she could have done so without his having in any way helped her to the knowledge, but lest some letter, some gossiping newsmonger, or some mischief-making busy-body should induce his wife to believe that he was carrying on some intimacy which he did not wish her to know of.

At last, the usual telegram appeared in the papers, announcing that the Calcutta mails had arrived at Alexandria, and that they might be expected at Marseilles upon such a date, and at Southampton so many days afterwards. Ten days later and the news was flashed by the wires from Gibraltar that the P. and O. Company's steamer, the Ripon, had put in there, had coaled, and passed on towards Southampton. The next day—he trumped up some fable by which Annie was induced to believe he had run over to Paris to meet an old friend—Sir John found himself engaging a sitting-room and three bedrooms at the hotel at Southampton, for himself and his two expected charges. The steamer was true to its time, as the boats of the P. and O. Company almost invariably are, and

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on going on board Sir John very soon discovered the two Miss Fabers, both glad enough to exchange the confinement of the vessel for the liberty of shore. The following day they were fairly installed in their house at Kensington, and Sir John congratulated himself on the idea that his troubles were at an end, whereas they had really hardly begun.

The governess to whose care Sir John had entrusted the two girls had never kept house for herself, and was in perpetual difficulties of some sort or other. Had Milson been able to tell his wife all about them, she would no doubt have gone to see them and set matters to rights very quickly. But the imperative wishes of his old friend Laber made this impossible, and so Sir John—always in a flurry lest he should be found out doing what he could give no explanation about—went on bungling and trying to mend matters, and only making them worse than before. One day he would receive a note from the lady, telling him that the cistern of their house would not work, and would he be good enough to send to the landlord about it. Another time it was the servants who would not obey her, and who would not do the work of the house; or else some tradesman had charged her fifty per cent too much, and was most insolent when she remonstrated with him.

For some time poor Sir John was kept perpetually upon the trot between Tyburnia and Kensington, but at last he secured the services of an experienced housekeeper, and put her in charge of the establishment, leaving the governess free to direct the studies of the young ladies. He was then not obliged to go so often to see his charges; but before he had got this settled his wife's suspicions were fairly aroused that there was something worrying him, and she felt quite certain that he had some secret annoyance of which he had not told her.

Up to this time there perhaps never was a couple that had fewer secrets between them than Sir John and Lady Milson. Even in money matters the former not only told his wife whatever and all that she asked him about, but made a point of frequently explaining to her the various items in his banker's book, and showing her how the money had been invested in this or that security, how the interest was paid, and all about it. In India—at least until Sir John was free of debt—it had been Annie who had kept the accounts; but since their return to England Sir John had to transact his own business, but had always shown his wife how matters stood. One day, wanting to see on what date she had paid a certain account, she went to his desk, and taking out his cheque-book began to turn over the counterfoils in order to find what she wanted. As she did so, the name of "Miss F." struck her eye two or three times, as having either received money from, or had money paid for her by, Sir John Milson. The name was repeated so often on the different counterfoils, that Lady Milson began to wonder who this lady could possibly be. Judging from the cheque-book, her husband must have been paying for everything this personage had in the world. Thus: "24th June, Miss F., millinery bill, fifty-nine pounds ten shillings and fourpence;" "28th June, Miss F., house-money, twenty-five pounds;" "1st July, Miss F., furniture, one hundred and forty pounds;" "2nd July, Miss F., pocket-money, twenty pounds;" "5th July, Miss F., bookseller's bill, thirteen pounds four shillings and fourpence;" "10th July, Miss F., furniture bill, one hundred pounds;" and so on, to the tune of five hundred and fifty or six hundred pounds, and all this within six weeks or two months. Now there are few wives who would not, under similar circumstances, have behaved much more foolishly than Annie did. She simply resolved, on the first possible occasion, to ask Sir John who this Miss F. was, and how it came to pass that he spent so much money upon her. Of course she had no idea that the cheques drawn by Sir John were not against his own income, and were paid from the money remitted by his old friend for the use of his children.

At dinner that evening Sir John had evidently something on his mind which worried him. The fact was, that he had the day before received at his club a very gushing note from his elder ward, thanking him for having forwarded to her a letter from her father. The note meant nothing: it was merely written by a girl of nineteen who was grateful to a man whom she looked upon as old enough to be her father. But in the hands of a person ignorant of the relation in which the writer stood to Sir John, or if read by one who thought he saw evil in every sentence he could not explain, Miss Faber's letter might be made to mean anything. Sir John, although a very orderly man in most things, was—like most people who have lived long in a country where their servants cannot understand their language—very careless about his letters, and seldom a week passed without his butler—who also valeted him—bringing him papers of some sort which he had left in his frock-coat when he dressed for dinner. This had been the fate of Miss Faber's letter. The butler had found it in the breast-pocket of his master's coat, and had no doubt made himself thoroughly acquainted with the contents before returning it. Sir John felt certain that the poor girl's letter had been the talk of the servants' room, and that, as his wife's maid was known to be "keeping company" with the butler, the chances were that some report—greatly exaggerated, as a matter of course—about this letter would reach his wife's ears. When they sat down to table, Lady Milson was wondering to herself who "Miss F.," who spent so much of her husband's money, could be; and Sir John was speculating whether or not she had heard anything about the letter which had been found in his coat-pocket. The dinner passed over silently and stiffly enough, and when it came to an end, and the servants had left the room, Lady Milson at once took up her parable and put the question to her husband.

"John, dear, I went to look over your cheque-

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book to-day, for I wanted to find out when I paid Gurk's last bill. I found here and there notes made of large sums of money you had paid a Miss F. *Who* is Miss F.?"

"It has come at last," said Sir John to himself. "How the mischief I am to get out of the mess now is more than I can see at present. What did you say, Annie?" he asked, in a louder voice, and to gain time.

"I asked," said Lady Milson, "who Miss F. is, for you seem, by your cheque-book, to have paid large sums lately either to her, or on her behalf?"

"Miss F., Miss F.," Sir John kept repeating, as if he could hardly understand the question. "I don't know any such person. I gave you a cheque for Miss Lamb, your dressmaker, some time ago; have you mistaken L. for F., Annie?"

"No, John, I made no mistake. There are at least seven or eight amounts noted on your cheque-book as paid to Miss F., and I wanted to know who that person is."

"Oh," said Sir John, a bright idea seizing him, "I see *now* what you mean, Annie. I remember all about it. You know Franks, the old Bombay colonel, who is always at the club?" (Sir John knew very well that Annie had never heard of the man before in her life, but he went on boldly.) "We always call Franks 'Miss,' because he is so smooth-faced, and talks so very like an old maid. Well, I have had some money sent me on his account from India, a kind of joint speculation in which he and Watson had shares, and I was to receive the dividends and pay each his quota. Watson took all his portion in a lump; but Franks asked me to invest his for him, and pay him the principal as he wanted it. I did so, and marked down each payment I made as for Miss F.—Miss Franks."

"That is it, is it?" said Lady Milson. "Do you know, I really began to think all kinds of strange things, John, when I saw those entries in your cheque-book;" and up-stairs went Lady Milson to the drawing-room, whilst Sir John retired to his study to smoke his after-dinner cheroot, and wonder whether he would have earned his bread if he had followed the calling of an improvisatore. Inquiry was stopped for the present, but it was only for a time. A few days later came the long impending explosion.

Sir John's wards had several times asked him to take them out a little in London, and to let them see something of the metropolis. Amongst other places they were very eager to visit was the Crystal Palace. They were so very new to London that they could not possibly go there alone, and their governess, who had lived nearly all the time of her sojourn in England with a noble family that resided in the country, confessed that she would be of little or no use in going with her pupils into public places. Sir John at last consented to take them to Sydenham. The day was fixed, and Milson proceeded to the house at Kensington where his wards resided. He found one of them suffering from a bad headache, but very urgent that her sister should not have to remain at home because she was too unwell to go out. Milson was by no means an ill-natured man. He would have been only too glad to take the daughters of his old friend out all day, and every day, had their existence, and who they were, been known to his friends, and particularly to his wife. But he dreaded being seen abroad with young ladies whose companionship might be construed into something which, although far from the truth, was a perfectly natural surmise. However, on this occasion he thought, for once, that he might lay aside his caution. His wife, he knew, had gone to lunch with Lady Fantzle, the wife of an old Indian friend, and in the afternoon the whole party were to proceed to see the pictures at the Royal Academy, which was just opened for the season. When Sir John left home, he told his wife that he was going into the City on business, that afterwards he had to see an official at the India House in Victoria-street, and that if he could get away in time he would join Lady Fantzle's party in Trafalgar-square. However, man proposes, but the gods dispose of events in this world.

FLIES.

"NONSENSE!" said my tenderest friend and life-companion, when I told her, as I always do, what I was going to write about. "You cannot possibly find anything to say about flies." This was my wife's first impression of the matter. "I should think," I replied, "that a good deal might be said about flies, and their uses in the economy of creation." "No doubt," said she; "but flies are a nuisance, especially those horrible mosquitoes, from which we suffered so much in America. Indeed, now I come to consider it, I think you might write something readable about those dreadful pests. I think the plague of flies, that afflicted Egypt when Pharaoh would not let the Israelites go free, must have been a plague of mosquitoes." "Very likely," said I; "and then you know that one of the names given to the devil is Beelzebub, or the Lord of the Flies." "I wish he had them all in his own dominions, then," rejoined my wife. "What all the flies?" I inquired. "Would you banish the bees and the butterflies in all their innumerable varieties of beauty, and the flying beetles, and the fire-flies that make night brilliant in warm latitudes?" "No," she replied. "I was wrong. I would only banish the common flies and the mosquitoes." "Then I will write about common flies and mosquitoes, and leave the bees and the butterflies alone."

The busy, impertinent, buzzing little creature known in most parts of the world as The Fly, is chiefly remarkable for its incessant cheerful activity, and for its constant thirstiness. It seems to have a love for everything that is succulent and sweet. In this respect, it is honourably distinguished from the culex, or gnat family, of which there are no less than thirty varieties in the British Isles, none of which have any taste

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for sweets, nor any relish for anything except the blood which they suck from the pores of animals. The house-fly is a veritable dipsomaniac:

> Busy, thirsty, curious fly,
> Thou shalt drink as well as I,

says the old convivial chant; and, in this predilection for drink, the fly very much resembles the toper who apostrophises him. Nothing potable comes amiss to him—from wine to brandy, from milk to water. Like man in search of his gratification, little musca continually comes to grief. At the breakfast-table he dips into the tea or coffee cup, if he have a chance, and is often scalded to death for his temerity. He darts from the sugar-basin to the cream-jug, and not unfrequently falls into the clammy liquor and is drowned for his greediness. Sitting alone at breakfast, one morning, at a country inn, with nothing particular to do, and with no newspaper or book to read, I amused myself by extricating an unfortunate fly from the cream into which it had fallen, and placed it upon the tablecloth to live or die, as fate, not I, might determine. It was not in my power to do anything more for my small fellow-creature. Its wings were clogged, for the cream was not London cream. It had not lain in this unhappy condition above a minute, when another fly was tempted to take a look. Whether the new comer understood the real state of the case, or whether it was too fond of cream to refuse to taste it, even when clotted over the body of a moribund brother, is not easy to decide; but putting out its little proboscis, it began to suck vigorously at the cream. Nor was it left alone to its enjoyment, or to its work of mercy, whichever it may have been, for it was speedily joined by five or six other flies, who all sucked away so busily at the cream on the legs, wings, and body of my little friend, that it soon began to turn and flutter. Ultimately it rose on its feet, rubbed its two fore-legs together, as a happy man rubs his hands, and finally flew away as briskly as if nothing had happened. Peter Pindar's toper would have replaced the fly in its wet grave, as he did, to the disgust of the company, the swarm of flies that darkened their bowl of punch:

> Up jumped the bacchanalian crew on this,
> Taking it very much amiss,
> Swearing, and in an attitude to smite:
> "Lord," cried the man, with gravely lifted eyes,
> "Though *I* don't like to swallow flies,
> "I did not know but *others might*."

It is the constant thirst which besets the fly that not only leads it into danger, but which principally renders it so troublesome in summer, whether to man or other animals. The fly settles upon your hand or face, not to suck your blood for a drink, like the mosquito, the gnat, or the midge, and, worst of all, the gallinipper, but simply that it may slake its thirst at the pearly drops upon your skin—visible and tempting to the fly, though invisible to yourself. When bent on an object of this kind, the perseverance of the fly is wonderful. Nothing but death will keep it away from you. Driven off for a moment, it returns to the charge, brave in its ignorance. Who has often succeeded in chasing a bluebottle into the four corners of a pane of glass, and so catching him? The only recorded instance of success is that of the irascible Anglo-Indian who, in his despair, seized a poker for the task. "I smashed the window," he exclaimed triumphantly, "but never mind—I killed the fly."

Naturalists tell us that the fly is stone-deaf—in this respect unlike the bee, which swarms to the noises made upon warming-pans or other metallic implements. But nature is always kind. The blind man receives compensation in the increased power of his other senses, especially that of touch; and in like manner our deaf little friend, the fly, can see both behind and before, and cannot be taken wholly unawares. The inconvenience suffered in our dwellings from the common house-fly is not great in the latitude of England, unless to grocers, butchers, and fishmongers; but in the middle and southern states of North America they are often as great a plague as mosquitoes. They tumble into your tea, your soup, your lager-beer, your wine, your gravy; they fasten upon every damp spot on the tablecloth in scores and hundreds; they cover every article of food, and defile your windows, your mirrors, your picture-frames—everything that is bright and shiny—and are the despair of the good housewife. You may catch them with fly-papers, and attract them with a light by a very ingenious "Yankee notion," and so kill them by countless thousands; but their numbers never seem to diminish. Nothing but the cold weather has any effect in staying the plague. The weakest are killed off by myriads when the frost comes, and the strongest betake themselves out of sight into little holes and corners of the walls, outside and in, or in the bark of trees, and compose themselves to sleep until the summer comes again. The fly, like the dormouse, the bear, and many other living creatures, hybernates. "Sleep," which Sancho Panza says "covers a man all over, thoughts and all, like a cloak," performs the same kindly office even for small unconsidered pests. Sometimes a gleam of sunshine in November or December wakes up a fly from his nap. The rash insect thinks that summer has come again, crawls out, shakes itself, and makes a melancholy attempt to be lively and happy. The adventurer generally pays with its life the penalty of its ignorance, and never sees summer nor lumps of sugar more.

Field-flies are not very troublesome in England, except to horses and cattle. They are mostly of a larger species than the domestic fly, and are considerably more ferocious and pertinacious. I was once coming down from the top of Goatfell, in the Island of Arran, one of the loveliest of the Western Isles, possessing one of the sublimest of Scotch mountains, when I was suddenly attacked by a cloud of flies a little larger than the domestic fly. The cloud was cer-

tainly a cube of fifteen or twenty feet, and must have contained millions of flies. They followed me for miles in my progress down the mountain towards the little hostelry of Brodick, and fastened upon every exposed part of face and neck, to drink in the moisture that hard exercise had brought out over all the surface of my body. I unloosed my plaid from my shoulders to swing it around me like a flail to scare away the invaders. In vain! In vain! One down, a thousand came on! I clapped my hands together in the midst of the cloud, and slew my hundreds at every coming together of my palms. It was of no use. You can't frighten a fly, you can only kill him. On they came—on, for ever on, like the rushing of Niagara! At last I struck into a belt of plantation, thickly wooded with fir and larch, where my tormentors seemed to lose their way; for in five minutes I was disembarrassed of them, much to my satisfaction. Since that time I have learned to sympathise with horses in vehicles pursued by flies for miles, in defiance of the whip of the driver; and to admire the friendly arrangement of two horses in a field. "Stand with your haunches towards my head," says Dobbin to Bobbin, "and brush away the flies from my ears with your beautiful long tail, and I will do the same good turn for you." "Agreed," says Bobbin to Dobbin; and so they stand for hours under the shadow of trees in the sultry summer heats, mutually helpful, and doubtless quite aware of the convenience as well as fairness of the bargain.

The first great use of all flies in the economy of nature seems to be to act the part of scavengers, and consume the decaying animal matters, or excretions, that are not good above ground—though they would be excellent under ground, if it were worth any one's while to put them there. The next is, that they shall supply food for birds and fishes. What is the use of the ephemera? They are born, grow old, and die in one day; they seem to do nothing in their short lifetime but dance in the sunshine, as if there were not a particle of sorrow in their little world—a large world enough for them.

A singular circumstance has lately been reported by scientific men on the subject of the domestic fly of Europe and America. Everybody knows that the civilised man is, and always has been, more than a match for the savage; and that before the continually encroaching steps of the Anglo-Saxon and other European races—but more especially the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian—the aborigines of the American continent, of the Cape of Good Hope, of Australia, and New Zealand, have been gradually disappearing. If two races refuse to amalgamate, the weaker goes to the wall. Civilisation is too much for them, and they retire from its presence only to linger a little while in the land of their fathers, conscious of their inferiority, and driven to the grave at last. That this should happen in the case of men is not very surprising, but that it should happen in the case of house-flies, is not a little remarkable. Dr. Haast, a Fellow of the Linnæan Society, writes to Dr. J. D. Hooker, from New Zealand, that not only does the European drive away the Maori or aboriginal inhabitant, but that the European house-fly drives away the New Zealand fly. Of two evils, New Zealand colonists prefer the lesser, and as the spread of the European insect goes on slowly, they are actually importing house-flies in boxes and bottles to their new inland stations. Is it that all living things that are much in the society of, or in immediate contiguity to man in a high state of civilisation, have their faculties sharpened by the association—sharpened, as it were, by danger, and the necessity of protecting themselves against such formidable foes. Is it that similar animals and insects in wild countries, where men are few, are not so highly educated by adverse circumstances, not so acute, clever, and wary; and that when superiors of their own race are brought into contact with them, the weaker flies before the stronger, as we see it among men?

Enough for the present on the subject of the fly. To please my wife, I turn to the mosquito, a creature which has not yet made its appearance in the British Isles (it is to be hoped it never will), but which has several near relations amongst us in the culex family, of which the gnat and the midge are the best known members. Mosquito is a Spanish word signifying a little fly. Though it be little, it makes up for deficiency of size by abundance of venom. Some of the fairest portions of the globe are rendered all but uninhabitable by these "pesky" insects. The mosquito, and his big brother the gallinipper, which is said to be able to sting into your leg through the leather of your jack-boot, though they do not altogether banish mankind from the warmer countries of the temperate zone, render those regions particularly uncomfortable in the summer days, and, above all, in the summer nights, when they not only "murder sleep," but in the woods have sometimes been known to murder sleepers.

Let me ask the reader to accompany me, in spirit, to a little cottage which I once occupied in Staten Island, near New York—one of the most compact and beautiful spots that the sun shines upon—and hear what is to be said about "skeeters," as many Americans call the mosquito for shortness. The cottage is a "frame" or wooden one, substantially built for winter as well as for summer habitation, and with a broad verandah in the front and on the eastern side, on which some English people—myself and wife among the number—and some Americans are seated in the cool of the evening. Before the verandah extends a flower-garden, beautifully laid out, and a reach of ground sloping for about a mile towards the Atlantic. Behind it are three acres of forest land; two of which are almost in the condition of the aboriginal wilderness, and contain some stately fir-trees, under the shadow of which the Red Indians may have erected their wigwams, smoked the calumet of peace, or dug

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up the war-hatchet for bloody fight. The other acre is laid out in a series of kitchen-gardens, which yield a bountiful crop of most of the vegetables known in Europe, and of several others which the English climate is not sunny enough to produce in the same excellence and profusion. Among others, the oyster-plant, the egg-plant, the tomato, and the ochra; the latter famous as the main ingredient of a delicious soup called "gumbo." The verandah—the pleasantest part of the house, and which in these American cottages and villas is the favourite resort of the family in the sultry afternoons of summer—is overgrown with roses and creeping vines of almost every variety, among which the bignonia, or trumpet-vine, is conspicuous for its beautiful red flowers.

As we are new to the country, this being our first summer in these sunny latitudes, we notice many things that escape the attention of the natives, as we sit in the verandah, look towards the ocean, and survey the scene around us. Most lovely is the clear blue sky, without a speck of cloud to relieve the monotony of the deep cerulean. The mercury in the thermometer stands at ninety-six degrees in the shade, and were it not for the whiff of the pleasant wind that creeps over the waters of the Atlantic, laden with freshness, the heat would be oppressive. As it is, the ice-pitcher is a valued friend, and the fan an inseparable companion, not only for the sake of the coolness which its motion imparts, but for its utility in driving away mosquitoes. Were it not for these intolerable plagues, the climate would be greatly preferable to that of England; but mosquitoes are a daily and a nightly misery. "There is a soul of goodness in things evil," I said to a neighbour, an American lady of English parentage who had come to our verandah; "and the all-wise Creator has made nothing in vain. Yet with the fullest faith in this doctrine, I could never find out of what use the mosquito was, or what were its purposes in the great scheme of the world." "Perhaps, not," replied the fair one; "but may not that be your own fault, Mr. Philosopher? In the first place, mosquitoes breed in the marshes. May they not warn us of the necessity of draining the marshes, and carrying off the stagnant waters, so as to increase the arable surface of the land? In the second place, mosquitoes, in countries where there are no marshes, breed in the running streams; the larvæ of the mosquitoes are the favourite food of young trout. And if you are fond of trout, why should the trout not have his dinner of mosquito larvæ, to be fatted for your enjoyment? In the third place, the sting of the mosquito inoculates, as I have heard say, against the attacks of fevers that are prevalent in all marshy and undrained countries; and surely a mosquito-bite is better than a fever, Mr. Philosopher?" It is always in vain to argue with a lady, so I said no more, inwardly content that so much could be urged in behalf even of the pestilential little creature, which was in those days a veritable thorn in the flesh of me and mine.

The mosquito has the treacherous habit of flying low. If you sit in your drawing-room (parlour it is always called in the United States) in your slippers, or in your library or study, if you are fortunate enough to possess one, in your dressing-gown and slippers, you will not be aware, if you are a new comer in the land, what brings the blains and swellings upon your instep, and all the portion of the leg and foot of which the stocking is the only defence. The cause is the mosquito. He flies near the carpet, sees with microscopic eye through the interstices of the woollen fabric, inserts his tube of suction into the flesh, and draws out as much blood as he needs for his thirst. If it ended there, no great harm would be done; but after he has drunken at your expense, he drops a little venom into the pore which he has opened; and the result is irritation, which you are prompted to relieve by counter-irritation, and constantly increasing inflammation of the envenomed part. The best alleviator is spirits of hartshorn—a phial of which most people who know the bane and antidote take care to have in readiness both at bed and board. As for me, I was compelled to relinquish the wearing of slippers, and retain my boots to the last moment before going to bed; not exonerated even then from the mosquitoes, which maliciously fastened upon the space—if I sat cross-legged—between the top of the boot and the trousers, and sucked and poisoned at their will. Ladies, less protected, suffer more than men in this respect. It is not to be understood that the mosquitoes confine themselves to the floor. They fly in every stratum from floor to roof; and bite whenever they get a chance. At night, sleep would be liable to painful disturbances, were it not for the mosquito-nets, which envelop the beds of all prudent sleepers. Even then, the difficulty is to prevent a mosquito or two from getting under the net while the bed is being made. If one enters, there might as well be a hundred. The evil is done; and if the intruder be not expelled, sleep is impossible. He peals a triumphal horn in your ear as he settles upon your forehead; and you might almost as successfully attempt to catch a flash of lightning in your hand, as to try to catch a mosquito.

The only way to be freed of this persecution is to hunt them by daylight. They generally settle upon the walls and ceiling, where a sharp and experienced eye can readily detect them. The most approved and successful mode of dealing with them is to get a common hair broom, and tie over the hair a wet cloth or towel, and dab the implement suddenly against the mosquito. This kills him, and does not alarm his fellows. With a little patience, keeping the doors and windows closed meanwhile, that none of the same tribe may enter, a careful servant or housewife can effectually clear a bedroom in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, and render sleep possible. In the Southern States the mosquito is developed in the swamps into the gallinipper—a great torment to the human race, but a greater

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torment to the brute creation. Sometimes a horse or ox, engaged in agricultural work in the fields, is clad in trousers—two pairs, of course—to guard its legs from this maddening scourge—the driver himself being tolerably well protected if he have a pipe in his mouth; for both mosquito and gallinipper detest the fumes of tobacco, and keep at a respectable distance from an earnest smoker. Pioneers in the wilderness, land-surveyors, geologists, naturalists, and others, who have to explore new regions, become so accustomed and hardened to the mosquitoes and gallinippers as to think little of them; but it is the pipe or the cigar by day, and the camp-fire by night, which keeps them at a distance; or no amount of familiarity with the nuisance would ever reconcile anybody to its infliction. But Europe and America, though subject to pests like these, are comparatively happy. The grievance, if great, is to be borne; and a gallinipper, atrocious as he is, is an angel of grace and mercy compared with a fly called the *seroot*, which, Sir Samuel White Baker tells us, infests Abyssinia. "The animals," he says, "are almost worried to death by the countless flies, especially by that species that drives the camels from the country. This peculiar fly is about the size of a wasp, with an orange-coloured body, with black and white rings; the proboscis is terrific; it is double, and appears to be disproportioned, being two-thirds the length of the entire insect. When this fly attacks an animal or man, it pierces the skin instantaneously, like the prick of a red-hot needle driven deep into the flesh, at the same time the insect exerts every muscle of its body by buzzing with its wings as it buries the instrument to its greatest depth. The blood starts from the wound immediately, and continues to flow for a considerable time; this is an attraction to other flies in great numbers, many of which lay their eggs upon the wound."

Better to endure the ills we have, than fly to others that we know not of. Better English flies and gnats, better American mosquitoes and gallinippers, than such a flying fiend as the Abyssinian seroot.

THE DEAR GIRL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," &c.

CHAPTER XXVI. THE LITTLE DINNER.

IN the interval, Vivian and Lucy wandered about, on this joyful day of the fair, inexpressibly happy. At "six sharp" they were at the café, where a neat little table for four had been laid, and the best dinner of the place ordered. Other tables near them were filled with guests. It was a busy time.

They waited a long time, and soon guessed, what was the truth, that the fitful Dacres had forgotten the whole, and had "picked up" some yet more pleasant friends, with whom he had gone off to dine at a far better establishment.

"I am not sorry," said Vivian. "We have waited long enough; and, had I been consulted, I should not have had that officer—at least, with you."

"He was charming," said Lucy, slyly. She was in great spirits. "And so gallant! And I am so sorry he is not here."

"Why should we not have our little dinner?" said Vivian. "No one knows us here."

"Oh, I should so like it!" said Lucy, clasping her hands. "As for the gossips, I can despise them. It is enough for them to say it, and I will go against them. Besides," she added, gravely, "if poor Harco came back and found us gone away——"

"Yes," said Vivian; "let us have our little dinner, and let me enjoy life while I may."

Women at other tables noticed the pair with interest. They called him "beau garçon." It was in the garden of the café, which was surrounded with arbours and little tables set out, and lamps already twinkling among the trees. Music, although of an indifferent sort, was playing in the centre. By-and-by there was to be a dance. Soldiers of the infantry of the line, hands deep in pockets, were lounging about, waiting for that blissful amusement. One had already planned how he would humbly, and with all politeness, secure the hand of the charming "mees" who was sitting in the arbour.

"Oh, this *is* happiness!" said Lucy, in delight. "What a charming day to think of!"

"And something for me, too, when I——But I will have no foreboding. I will never be gloomy; and whatever you do with me, or however you treat me, you shall see no change on my face, no wild eyes nor wicked glances."

Lucy laughed. "I know why you say that, and who you are thinking of. It *is* a little absurd, and people think it strange. Poor Mr. West! and yet I so pity him."

"Pity him!" said Vivian, warmly. "I am afraid there is a morbid vindictiveness under all that. It is speaking too gently of him. As for me, he glares at me, as I pass him, in a way that would be alarming, if it were not comical. Poor soul! Yet I dare say he was preyed upon by this delusion of being injured, until it has taken hold of him. Sometimes he seems to be a little unsettled in his mind."

"That occurred to me, too," said Lucy, gravely, and with much concern. "And yet he is *so* changed. He was once—and not long ago—oh! so noble, so kind, so chivalrous! I would have done anything for him, and liked him so much; but even then he was odd," added Lucy doubtfully. "Curious—for papa wished me to promise to marry him, and *he* wished it; and I had come that very day from Miss Pringle's, and had never *seen any one*," went on Lucy, apologetically. "But he took such a curious turn, and wouldn't hear of it. He said I must wait for years, perhaps, and must learn to like him, so that, unless I felt I could do so after a long, long time, it must not be thought of. He forced this on me, and made it a bargain."

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"An odd being, indeed," said Vivian, smiling.

"Then he comes back," went on Lucy, "and he finds that I have done what he wished; and of a sudden all his liking, and good sense, and his wish for *my interest*, change into a sort of fury. I have an instinct that at this moment he hates me, and would kill me, if he could."

"You may despise him, dearest Lucy. He shall do you no harm, not even by so much as a look, while I am with you. But we may be charitable, and believe that this is some morbid brooding. That strange sister of his, too!"

"Yes, yes," said Lucy, eagerly. "I am sure that is it, and that he is good; but that he is a little unsettled in mind. Poor, poor Mr. West, if it should be that!"

"And do you know," said the colonel, "I begin to think your father was right in thinking he saw his face to-day. It is just like what a man in that state of mind would do—follow and spy on us."

"Papa!" said Lucy, starting. "What can have become of him? He should have come back by this time; and we are to get back? It is so late."

"He is here, don't be afraid," said Vivian, rising. "He has got with some of these good fellows, and thought we would be rather dull company for him. I am sure he is in the café, or close by here, at the Silver Horn opposite. Shall I run and ask?"

"Do, do," said Lucy, hurriedly, getting her "things," "and find him."

He was not likely to do that, for Papa Harco was at this moment delightfully engaged at a capital café about a mile off, with two French gentlemen and an English friend, enjoying themselves. A comic French gentleman had given them "The Drum-Major's Song," with a drum-accompaniment on the table, that made all the glasses fly into the air; and Mr. Dacres's turn having now come, he was warbling, with infinite pathos and expression,

> "Earth ne'er saw so fair a cree-ature!
> Sweet Maria of the vale.
> She, my love, all heart and nature——"

Vivian had been gone about a moment, when a stout gentleman came up, bowing and simpering to Lucy, whom she recognised as the ancient French "colonel in retreat." She received him with her natural air of welcome, for she knew now her father was at hand. "Where is he?" she said; "where did you leave him? We wish to go home."

"Go home, my dear mees," said the colonel, sitting down beside her on the outside, and thus cutting off her exit, "what folly! Just as I come up to lay myself at your feet. Nay, you must not turn away those liquid swimming eyes from one who would be proud to be your adorer." From the colonel's own eyes, much more entitled to be described as "swimming" than Lucy's, it was plain that he had recently been enjoying the pleasures of the table. Much alarmed, she moved away, and tried to rise and escape from him. The half-pay colonel followed her. "Ah, pretty little colombe, what are you afraid of? Of me, your adorer? Come, don't be unkind, lovely mees."

"Sir," said Lucy, in great agitation, but not at all losing her presence of mind, "you must go away; and you must let me pass, or, sir, I shall call some one."

"What, to Jules or Charles, who know me as well as my own mother? Nonsense; sit down, and don't be foolish. There is no use. Your friend won't return. I sent him a long way to look for that good child, your papa."

"Oh, what shall I do?" cried Lucy, in terror at this sense of desertion and helplessness.

"You will stay with me, my loveliest, and we we will be happy. Your lover is gone; why shall not I do in his room? Come, sit down, charming mees." Seizing her wrist, he gently drew her down into the seat beside him.

Lucy was paralysed with terror. Another girl would have screamed, but she would not for the world have a crowd and confusion. All she could find strength to do was to say in English, "Is there no one here to help me?"

Almost as she spoke she saw a familiar face gazing at her with sad, solemn, and sorrowful eyes fixed upon her. That grave figure was standing before them both, but without speaking or moving.

The colonel looked at him a moment, then said sharply, "Well, monsieur, have you finished? Have you taken your notes for our portraits?"

West did not answer him, but said in English to her, "This is quite charming! Is this your last and newest friend?"

Lucy was so astounded at this turn, that she forgot her situation and its terrors. Her lips curled, and with scorn she replied, "Is this your way of befriending a girl? is this your noble revenge?"

His eyes flashed. "Pray what can you expect from one *who is unsettled in his mind?* How can *he* behave rationally? I heard *that speech*." Then he turned to the colonel. "Sir, you have made a mistake. This young lady is not alone here, and I must ask you to retire. I will look to her and take her to her friends."

The colonel twirled his moustache savagely. "Come, that is very excellent! Do you know, sir, *you* seem to be the intruder here. I can see by mees's looks that you are not over-welcome. She wants none of your lectures and warnings."

"You see," said West, still to her, "you see to what you have exposed yourself."

"Come! Do you hear me?" said the colonel, standing up and speaking furiously. "Do you want a soufflet to make you move?"

This ugly word roused West. "I am not going to make a brawl before this young lady, and have gendarmes called in. There is another way of doing this."

"Ah," screamed Lucy, in delight, "there he is! Oh, you have come back, dear Vivian! *You* will protect me. You will save me, if no one else will."

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She had run round to him—away from both —and was on his arm. Vivian saw how things stood in a second.

"Surely," he said, perhaps on purpose, "with your friend, Mr. West, here, no one would have ventured——"

"And what do *you* want?" said the "colonel in retreat," now baffled. "So you are her preserver! Then, let me tell you, mees was not so anxious for you, after all. Bah! What are you worth?"

"Don't speak to me," said Vivian, coolly, and it seemed to Lucy with the most splendid hauteur. "Why do you intrude your drunkenness here on a private party? I give you two seconds, or I call that gendarme, who has his eye on you already."

The colonel gave one look of ferocity, then recollected himself and became quite changed. With a ferocious politeness he bowed, and then drew himself up, saying: "I see; very good, monsieur, and very good, *you*, too, monsieur. All in good time; every one in his turn. I have the honour to wish you good night. Mademoiselle, receive my homage."

"Another minute," said Vivian, when he had gone, "and I had taken him by his thick throat and kicked him out of the place. A low ruffian! But, Mr. West, I am astonished! You, an Englishman and a friend, to look on so long!"

"Yes," said Lucy, her voice trembling, "Mr. West was letting me be insulted there before his face. He would have let this man go on, only, thank God, *you* came. As I live, he was taking no notice, and, as I believe, would have left me there, dear Vivian."

West was speechless, and looked from one to the other a little wildly. "No! no! You to say this!"

"He was too busy," Lucy went on, in the same tone of bitter contempt, "listening and eavesdropping to our conversation. He could do that, but he could not be generous to raise his hand for one he hated!"

West said not a word. Vivian looked at him from head to foot, and said, half pityingly: "I am sorry for this. But come away, dearest, we must get back. Your good father, it seems, went off long ago to Dieppe. I have got a carriage waiting, and I think it better that we should get home as quickly as possible."

West stood there looking after them in a sort of stupefaction. Long after did he recal Lucy's haughty contempt. It had pierced him like a dagger. Suddenly he felt Vivian's hand on his arm. "The carriage is here, and you had better return with us. You should do this, and I think it would be only right."

"What!" said the other, bitterly. "You think I am so weak and *unsettled in mind*, that I cannot be trusted here alone?"

"What folly! This sensitiveness is worthy only of pity; but I am sorry you should have condescended to *that*."

"You dare not charge me with such a thing," said West, vehemently. "*She* dare not, either! It is a slander. Do not think I will submit to you two—leagued to torture me out of happiness, and honour, and life itself!"

"There is no such thing dreamed of," the other said, calmly, "except in your own morbid imagination. The reason I ask you to return with us is for *her* sake. You know what sort of a place Dieppe is."

"I see," said West, bitterly; "for fear of the stories! But will *that* affect the matter? What about the rest of this precious day? All this evening, when she was wandering over the country with you! Who will explain or clear up *that?* I tell you it is shocking and discreditable. And you come to *me* to patch up things. I shall have no part in it. I refuse."

Vivian looked at him in astonishment and sorrow, and, without a word, turned away. In a few moments, West heard the wheels of their carriage.

The unhappy gentleman, looking still in the direction in which they had disappeared, repeated vacantly: "Yes, they are right; it is coming fast to *that*. Madness will finish all; and perhaps it will be the best end of all. The cruel, cruel girl! But she—they shall not be happy in my shipwreck. They shall have real cause to fear or to hate me."

CHAPTER XXVII. A CHANGE.

SUDDENLY a scheme darted into his head. That Frenchman, "the colonel in retreat," he would not pass over what had occurred. Then he would gladly meet him, anywhere and anyhow. "And if he kills me, which he is sure to do, that pitiless girl will have that blood on her head, and may then repent!" Here was a practical plan, action, something "to do," which he longed for.

"Why, West, my boy," said a voice, "you look like Hamlet and the ghost. Methinks I see my father's spirit. Hey? What ails you? Where's 'my Lulu'? as that fool of a Dacres calls her; and where's l'among—l'among aimay? Eh? Does that touch you under the fifth rib?"

West was quite ready to resent Captain Filby's impertinence; but he had a reason for restraint. "They are gone away," he said, calmly; "gone home."

"What, together? Oh, nice pranks! I saw some of their proceedings to-day."

"I dare say," said West. "I can believe anything—of him, at least. Is it generous, is it honourable, is it fair, for a man who should know the world, to take advantage because a young girl likes him, and bring her to a place of this sort, to be insulted by common ruffians?"

"Insulted by common ruffians? Phew!" said the captain, greatly interested. "You don't tell me so."

"I am afraid—that is, I am glad—I have been drawn into a quarrel with a French captain here about it. I have no friend. I never had any in my whole life, and perhaps it has been the best for me. But you, even as an Englishman, you wouldn't stand by and see one of the same country go out to be murdered?"

Captain Filby shaded his old eyes to get a

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good look at West. His first impression was "Drunk;" his next, "Mad as any hatter alive." But he relished the proposal. In the regiment he had often assisted in such affairs. There was one young man who it was said owed his death to the management of Captain Filby, who had ferociously refused an apology. "I'd be glad to see you shoot a Frenchman, West; and though this infernal rheumatism is racking my life, I'll go out with you. And, what's more, I have the old pair of executioners with me." His face quite lit up with pleasure at this proposal of enjoyment; and indeed he told West that he would find it do him a world of good, and bring all to a head nicely.

As the captain turned away, a stout, unhealthy-looking man, not unlike Colonel Pepin, but a good deal shabbier, came up to West with a bow. "I am Pequinet, formerly lieutenant. (He was also "ancient" and "in retreat.") "The honour of my friend, Colonel Pepin, was wounded to-night. You will permit me to have the honour of informing you—by your behaviour—he insists on reparation."

"Which he shall have," said West, with alacrity. "When and where you please; as long and as often as you like. Now."

"Folly, stuff!" said Captain Filby, thrusting himself forward. "What *are* you saying? Leave this to me, or leave it alone. To-morrow, sir! All in good time. We shall see you in Dieppe."

They drove home. He dropped Captain Filby at his own house; then walked home himself. As he was crossing the Place, a figure fluttered by him, whom he looked at absently, and hastened on. The figure had hurried after him, and was beside him. "Mon ami," it said, "I am so delighted. I heard of you to-day, from your good sister. God will bless this noble attempt of yours to conquer yourself."

West answered him impatiently: "I have made no exertion, and want no blessing. The finest and most perfect nature could not do it. All the demons of hell seem leagued against me to persecute and harass me!"

The abbé looked at him sorrowfully. "After all, it is only the usual course. We must try many times before we succeed, and fail, and fail again. I did not expect it. We must not lose heart."

"Ah! we can all preach," said West, bitterly. "I have been too gentle hitherto. Good night."

"Hear me a moment," said the abbé, anxiously. "I am going your way——"

"I am tired of advice," said West, stopping impatiently, "and I am not one of your flock, M. l'Abbé. Oh! forgive me, dear, good sir, but you know not what I have gone through, and what I have to go through. If you knew *that*, indeed. Give me your prayers; they can do no harm."

The abbé looked after him sorrowfully, and then went his way without a word.

As West went up-stairs, the two women heard his heavy step enter his own room, and shut the door impatiently. The two faces were turned to each other with blank consternation. They knew the whole story, as though they had witnessed it themselves. Indeed, on his mental state they hung suspended, like relatives or children on the health of an invalid parent, whose restoration of to-day, or relapse of to-morrow, sends joy or gloom through the house.

They did not see him that night. In the morning, at breakfast-time, they read a whole night of trouble in his face, with the enforced calm infinitely more distressful. They knew he had been out betimes that morning. He had come back moody and silent, yet with a strange and restless fire in his eye. Then, to their greater astonishment, Captain Filby called, being "made up," as Mr. Dacres would have said, "to the ninety-nines"—whatever standard that was. All that day he remained at home. They heard his ceaseless pacing. Their wistful faces were turned often to each other with a hopeless speculation. Something dreadful, it seemed, was coming.

About three o'clock he came in to them.

"I am going away," he said, abruptly; "perhaps for an hour or two, perhaps for a very, very long time. I cannot endure this any longer. I am weak, wretched, helpless, contemptible. I have let this miserable childish delusion prey on me until I cannot live or sleep. Dear Margaret and Constance, I have been very selfish and cruel to you both, but you will forgive me. It is time it should end, one way or the other."

"Oh! Gilbert, Gilbert, what does all this mean?" cried Margaret, suddenly becoming natural. "What are you going to do?"

At that moment the bonne came up to say that a gentleman, M. Vivian, wished to see him. At that name West started, and then went down to him. Vivian was cold, and even stern.

"I have only just learned," he said, "that you are about taking a step which must not be thought of for a moment."

West understood him perfectly.

"Why not, pray?" he said, calmly. "It is my own affair altogether, is it not?"

"Why not?" repeated Vivian, excitedly. "First, because *she* is concerned, and we must not have her pure name sullied by any vulgar quarrel."

"It is *my* affair," repeated West, slowly. "Her name is not concerned at all. Who wishes to sully it?"

"Not concerned? Do you know what sort of a place this is? I am astonished you do not see this yourself," said Vivian, passionately. "I *did* think you were noble and generous, and that her name, or any woman's name, would have been a talisman. But there is another reason, which is conclusive. I have seen the chief of the police; and the person you quarrelled with, and wish to meet as a gentleman, is a low ruffian, who was turned out of the army years ago."

West stared at him, but put a constraint upon himself. "And you," he said, abruptly,

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"who are so interested for her—what is your office? What is to be your relation to her, if I might ask? Do they not say she is to marry you?"

Vivian coloured. "That would be my greatest happiness, and I do look forward to it one day."

"Ah!" interrupted the other, fiercely; "I see. The usual generality! I can see what that means. That will not impose on me. I have watched you. I can see behind *that* trick. There is some game being played; and perhaps Heaven may put it into my hands to frustrate it."

"What do you mean?" said the other, turning still paler.

"Not from any love to her: I owe *her* nothing. But with you I can reckon. There is some mystery in this hanging back. How confused you grow! I *am* right. By Heaven, I am!"

"This is all madness," said Vivian, turning away.

"Yes," said West; "but you shall find I have method, too. *Now* we understand each other, Colonel Vivian; and let her understand me, and tell her her cruel and unkind words have sunk into my heart. God forgive her!"

"That is all for yourself," said Vivian, excitedly. "And I warn you, in return, we shall be on our guard; and I tell you, plainly, any frantic step on your side shall be met on mine in a way you little dream of."

"Good," said the other. "We understand each other now!"

But we, who know what sort of a place Dieppe was, its surprising sensitiveness to the smallest rumour or whisper of a rumour, can conceive that such a momentous adventure as Lucy's must permeate the place like water through a gravelly soil.

Before the evening came, Mr. Blacker, the official scandal-monger, was in possession of some strange details. He had become inflated with the vast importance of the matter, and had gone express to Mrs. Dalrymple. "Such an awkward, such a very doubtful business! God forbid, ma'am, it was *my* daughter. West, I am told, found her down at that little dirty guinguette, actually sitting with some low Frenchman. I am afraid, badly brought up; but you know, with that harum-scarum father, what could you expect?"

Mrs. Dalrymple, who had always been partial to West, and knew his worth, had long ago "turned" against Lucy. She now spoke warmly. "I am afraid I could believe anything of that girl. You know how lightly and cruelly she treated poor Gilbert West. The man is suffering there before her eyes, and she hasn't even a kind look or word for him."

"Oh! but, my dear lady," said Mr. Blacker, with infinite relish, "I haven't half done. I was coming to him. What does she do, I'm told, but drag *him* into a quarrel with this questionable French friend of hers."

"Good Heavens!" said Mrs. Dalrymple, absorbed in interest, "you don't tell me so! What things we hear every day!"

"That poor infatuated West, in his gentle way, tried to remonstrate with her, and she turned on him, ma'am, and got her champion to turn on him, and only for the police, ma'am, there'd have been a duel."

This was really dramatic news for the colony. Not every day did they meet with a morsel so substantial.

The Dear Girl was utterly unconscious of the fiery cross of scandal being thus sent round. Indeed, she never had been so happy as during these days; for since that holiday "her Vivian's heart," as the old story-tellers would say, had never been so much hers.

Vivian himself seemed now not to think of the old difficulties—perhaps shut his eyes to them. He told her he had a presentiment that they were to be soon happy, and that shortly, which was accepted as an official revelation. They were both living in a dream; and, above all, she could meet with calm eye and cold gaze the look of the man who had shown his hatred and malignity to her in unmistakable terms. But as she walked by exultant and triumphant on her lover's arm, she could not but notice the smiles, and looks, and whispers which followed her.

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THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

CHAPTER IV.

I am truly sorry to detain you over me and my beehive chair. A sleepy old man, in a sunny back yard, is not an interesting object, I am well aware. But things must be put down in their places, as things actually happened—and you must please to jog on a little while longer with me, in expectation of Mr. Franklin Blake's arrival later in the day.

Before I had time to doze off again, after my daughter Penelope had left me, I was disturbed by a rattling of plates and dishes in the servants' hall, which meant that dinner was ready. Taking my own meals in my own sitting-room, I had nothing to do with the servants' dinner, except to wish them a good stomach to it all round, previous to composing myself once more in my chair. I was just stretching my legs, when out bounced another woman on me. Not my daughter again; only Nancy, the kitchen-maid, this time. I was straight in her way out; and I observed, as she asked me to let her by, that she had a sulky face—a thing which, as head of the servants, I never allow, on principle, to pass me without inquiry.

"What are you turning your back on your dinner for?" I asked. "What's wrong now, Nancy?"

Nancy tried to push by, without answering; upon which I rose up, and took her by the ear. She is a nice plump young lass, and it is customary with me to adopt that manner of showing that I personally approve of a girl.

"What's wrong now?" I said once more.

"Rosanna's late again for dinner," says Nancy. "And I'm sent to fetch her in. All the hard work falls on my shoulders in this house. Let me alone, Mr. Betteredge!"

The person here mentioned as Rosanna was our second housemaid. Having a kind of pity for our second housemaid (why, you shall presently know), and seeing in Nancy's face that she would fetch her fellow-servant in with more hard words than might be needful under the circumstances, it struck me that I had nothing particular to do, and that I might as well fetch Rosanna myself; giving her a hint to be punctual in future, which I knew she would take kindly from *me*.

"Where is Rosanna?" I inquired.

"At the sands, of course!" says Nancy, with a toss of her head. "She had another of her fainting-fits this morning, and she asked to go out and get a breath of fresh air. I have no patience with her!"

"Go back to your dinner, my girl," I said. "I have patience with her, and I'll fetch her in."

Nancy (who has a fine appetite) looked pleased. When she looks pleased, she looks nice. When she looks nice, I chuck her under the chin. It isn't immorality—it's only habit.

Well, I took my stick, and set off for the sands.

No! it won't do to set off yet. I am sorry again to detain you; but you really must hear the story of the sands, and the story of Rosanna—for this reason, that the matter of the Diamond touches them both nearly. How hard I try to get on with my statement without stopping by the way, and how badly I succeed! But, there!—Persons and Things do turn up so vexatiously in this life, and will in a manner insist on being noticed. Let us take it easy, and let us take it short; we shall be in the thick of the mystery soon, I promise you!

Rosanna (to put the Person before the Thing, which is but common politeness) was the only new servant in our house. About four months before the time I am writing of, my lady had been in London, and had gone over a Reformatory, intended to save forlorn women from drifting back into bad ways, after they had got released from prison. The matron, seeing my lady took an interest in the place, pointed out a girl to her, named Rosanna Spearman, and told her a most miserable story, which I haven't the heart to repeat here; for I don't like to be made wretched without any use, and no more do you. The upshot of it was, that Rosanna Spearman had been a thief, and not being of the sort that get up Companies in the City, and rob from thousands, instead of only robbing from one, the law laid hold of her, and

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the prison and the reformatory followed the lead of the law. The matron's opinion of Rosanna was (in spite of what she had done) that the girl was one in a thousand, and that she only wanted a chance to prove herself worthy of any Christian woman's interest in her. My lady (being a Christian woman, if ever there was one yet) said to the matron, upon that, "Rosanna Spearman shall have her chance, in my service." In a week afterwards, Rosanna Spearman entered this establishment as our second housemaid.

Not a soul was told the girl's story, excepting Miss Rachel and me. My lady, doing me the honour to consult me about most things, consulted me about Rosanna. Having fallen a good deal latterly into the late Sir John's way of always agreeing with my lady, I agreed with her heartily about Rosanna Spearman.

A fairer chance no girl could have had than was given to this poor girl of ours. None of the servants could cast her past life in her teeth, for none of the servants knew what it had been. She had her wages and her privileges, like the rest of them; and every now and then a friendly word from my lady, in private, to encourage her. In return, she showed herself, I am bound to say, well worthy of the kind treatment bestowed upon her. Though far from strong, and troubled occasionally with those fainting-fits already mentioned, she went about her work modestly and uncomplainingly, doing it carefully, and doing it well. But, somehow, she failed to make friends among the other women-servants, excepting my daughter Penelope, who was always kind to Rosanna, though never intimate with her.

I hardly know what the girl did to offend them. There was certainly no beauty about her to make the others envious; she was the plainest woman in the house, with the additional misfortune of having one shoulder bigger than the other. What the servants chiefly resented, I think, was her silent tongue and her solitary ways. She read or worked in leisure hours, when the rest gossiped. And, when it came to her turn to go out, nine times out of ten she quietly put on her bonnet, and had her turn by herself. She never quarrelled, she never took offence; she only kept a certain distance, obstinately and civilly, between the rest of them and herself. Add to this that, plain as she was, there was just a dash of something that wasn't like a housemaid, and that *was* like a lady, about her. It might have been in her voice, or it might have been in her face. All I can say is, that the other women pounced on it like lightning the first day she came into the house; and said (which was most unjust) that Rosanna Spearman gave herself airs.

Having now told the story of Rosanna, I have only to notice one out of the many queer ways of this strange girl, to get on next to the story of the sands.

Our house is high up on the Yorkshire coast, and close by the sea. We have got beautiful walks all round us, in every direction but one. That one I acknowledge to be a horrid walk. It leads, for a quarter of a mile, through a melancholy plantation of firs, and brings you out between low cliffs on the loneliest and ugliest little bay on all our coast.

The sand-hills here run down to the sea, and end in two spits of rock jutting out opposite each other, till you lose sight of them in the water. One is called the North Spit, and one the South. Between the two, shifting backwards and forwards at certain seasons of the year, lies the most horrible quicksand on the shores of Yorkshire. At the turn of the tide, something goes on in the unknown deeps below, which sets the whole face of the quicksand quivering and trembling in a manner most remarkable to see, and which has given to it, among the people in our parts, the name of The Shivering Sand. A great bank, half a mile out, nigh the mouth of the bay, breaks the force of the main ocean coming in from the offing. Winter and summer, when the tide flows over the quicksand, the sea seems to leave the waves behind it on the bank, and rolls its waters in smoothly with a heave, and covers the sand in silence. A lonesome and a horrid retreat, I can tell you! No boat ever ventures into this bay. No children from our fishing-village, called Cobb's Hole, ever come here to play. The very birds of the air, as it seems to me, give the Shivering Sand a wide berth. That a young woman, with dozens of nice walks to choose from, and company to go with her, if she only said, "Come!" should prefer this place, and should sit and work or read in it, all alone, when it's her turn out, I grant you, passes belief. It's true, nevertheless, account for it as you may, that this was Rosanna Spearman's favourite walk, except when she went once or twice to Cobb's Hole, to see the only friend she had in our neighbourhood—of whom more anon. It's also true that I was now setting out for this same place, to fetch the girl in to dinner, which brings us round happily to our former point, and starts us fair again on our way to the sands.

I saw no sign of the girl in the plantation. When I got out, through the sand-hills, on to the beach, there she was, in her little straw bonnet, and her plain grey cloak that she always wore to hide her deformed shoulder as much as might be—there she was, all alone, looking out on the quicksand and the sea.

She started when I came up with her, and turned her head away from me. Not looking me in the face being another of the proceedings which, as head of the servants, I never allow, on principle, to pass without inquiry—I turned her round my way, and saw that she was crying. My bandanna handkerchief—one of six beauties given to me by my lady—was handy in my pocket. I took it out, and I said to Rosanna, "Come and sit down, my dear, on the slope of the beach along with me. I'll dry your eyes for you first, and then I'll make

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so bold as to ask what you have been crying about."

When you come to my age, you will find sitting down on the slope of a beach a much longer job than you think it now. By the time I was settled, Rosanna had dried her own eyes with a very inferior handkerchief to mine—cheap cambric. She looked very quiet, and very wretched; but she sat down by me like a good girl, when I told her. When you want to comfort a woman by the shortest way, take her on your knee. I thought of this golden rule. But there! Rosanna wasn't Nancy, and that's the truth of it!

"Now tell me, my dear," I said, "what are you crying about?"

"About the years that are gone, Mr. Betteredge," says Rosanna, quietly. "My past life still comes back to me sometimes."

"Come, come, my girl," I said, "your past life is all sponged out. Why can't you forget it?"

She took me by one of the lappets of my coat. I am a slovenly old man, and a good deal of my meat and drink gets splashed about on my clothes. Sometimes one of the women, and sometimes another, cleans me of my grease. The day before, Rosanna had taken out a spot for me on the lappet of my coat, with a new composition, warranted to remove anything. The grease was gone, but there was a little dull place left on the nap of the cloth where the grease had been. The girl pointed to that place and shook her head.

"The stain is taken off," she said. "But the place shows, Mr. Betteredge—the place shows!"

A remark which takes a man unawares by means of his own coat is not an easy remark to answer. Something in the girl herself, too, made me particularly sorry for her just then. She had nice brown eyes, plain as she was in other ways—and she looked at me with a sort of respect for my happy old age and my good character, as things for ever out of her own reach, which made my heart heavy for our second housemaid. Not feeling myself able to comfort her, there was only one other thing to do. That thing was—to take her in to dinner.

"Help me up," I said. "You're late for dinner, Rosanna—and I have come to fetch you in."

"You, Mr. Betteredge!" says she.

"They told Nancy to fetch you," I said. "But I thought you might like your scolding better, my dear, if it came from me."

Instead of helping me up, the poor thing stole her hand into mine, and gave it a little squeeze. She tried hard to keep from crying again, and succeeded—for which I respected her. "You're very kind, Mr. Betteredge," she said. "I don't want any dinner to-day—let me bide a little longer here."

"What makes you like to be here?" I asked. "What is it that brings you everlastingly to this miserable place?"

"Something draws me to it," says the girl, making images with her finger in the sand. "I try to keep away from it, and I can't. Sometimes," says she, in a low voice, as if she was frightened at her own fancy, "sometimes, Mr. Betteredge, I think that my grave is waiting for me here."

"There's roast mutton and suet-pudding waiting for you!" says I. "Go in to dinner directly. This is what comes, Rosanna, of thinking on an empty stomach!" I spoke severely, being naturally indignant (at my time of life) to hear a young woman of five-and-twenty talking about her latter end!

She didn't seem to hear me: she put her hand on my shoulder, and kept me where I was, sitting by her side.

"I think the place has laid a spell on me," she said. "I dream of it, night after night; I think of it when I sit stitching at my work. You know I am grateful, Mr. Betteredge—you know I try to deserve your kindness, and my lady's confidence in me. But I wonder sometimes whether the life here is too quiet and too good for such a woman as I am, after all I have gone through, Mr. Betteredge—after all I have gone through. It's more lonely to me to be among the other servants, knowing I am not what they are, than it is to be here. My lady doesn't know, the matron at the reformatory doesn't know, what a dreadful reproach honest people are in themselves to a woman like me. Don't scold me, there's a dear good man. I do my work, don't I? Please not to tell my lady I am discontented—I am not. My mind's unquiet sometimes, that's all." She snatched her hand off my shoulder, and suddenly pointed down to the quicksand. "Look!" she said. "Isn't it wonderful? isn't it terrible? I have seen it dozens of times, and it's always as new to me as if I had never seen it before!"

I looked where she pointed. The tide was on the turn, and the horrid sand began to shiver. The broad brown face of it heaved slowly, and then dimpled and quivered all over. "Do you know what it looks like to *me*?" says Rosanna, catching me by the shoulder again. "It looks as if it had hundreds of suffocating people under it—all struggling to get to the surface, and all sinking lower and lower in the dreadful deeps! Throw a stone in, Mr. Betteredge! Throw a stone in, and let's see the sand suck it down!"

Here was unwholesome talk! Here was an empty stomach feeding on an unquiet mind! My answer—a pretty sharp one, in the poor girl's own interests, I promise you!—was at my tongue's end, when it was snapped short off on a sudden by a voice among the sand-hills shouting for me by my name. "Betteredge!" cries the voice, "where are you?" "Here!" I shouted out in return, without a notion in my mind of who it was. Rosanna started to her feet, and stood looking towards the voice. I was just thinking of getting on my own legs next, when I was staggered by a sudden change in the girl's face.

Her complexion turned of a beautiful red,

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which I had never seen in it before; she brightened all over with a kind of speechless and breathless surprise. "Who is it?" I asked. Rosanna gave me back my own question. "Oh! who is it?" she said softly, more to herself than to me. I twisted round on the sand, and looked behind me. There, coming out on us from among the hills, was a bright-eyed young gentleman, dressed in a beautiful fawn-coloured suit, with gloves and hat to match, with a rose in his button-hole, and a smile on his face that might have set the Shivering Sand itself smiling at him in return. Before I could get on my legs, he plumped down on the sand by the side of me, put his arm round my neck, foreign fashion, and gave me a hug that fairly squeezed the breath out of my body. "Dear old Betteredge!" says he. "I owe you seven and sixpence. Now do you know who I am?"

Lord bless us and save us! Here—four good hours before we expected him—was Mr. Franklin Blake!

Before I could say a word, I saw Mr. Franklin, a little surprised to all appearance, look up from me to Rosanna. Following his lead, I looked at the girl too. She was blushing of a deeper red than ever; seemingly at having caught Mr. Franklin's eye, and she turned and left us suddenly, in a confusion quite unaccountable to my mind, without either making her curtsey to the gentleman or saying a word to me—very unlike her usual self: a civiller and better-behaved servant, in general, you never met with.

"That's an odd girl," says Mr. Franklin. "I wonder what she sees in me to surprise her?"

"I suppose, sir," I answered, drolling on our young gentleman's continental education, "it's the varnish from foreign parts."

I set down here Mr. Franklin's careless question, and my foolish answer, as a consolation and encouragement to all stupid people—it being, as I have remarked, a great satisfaction to our inferior fellow-creatures to find that their betters are, on occasions, no brighter than they are. Neither Mr. Franklin, with his wonderful foreign training, nor I, with my age, experience, and natural mother-wit, had the ghost of an idea of what Rosanna Spearman's unaccountable behaviour really meant. She was out of our thoughts, poor soul, before we had seen the last flutter of her little grey cloak among the sand-hills. And what of that? you will ask, naturally enough. Read on, good friend, as patiently as you can, and perhaps you will be as sorry for Rosanna Spearman as I was, when I found out the truth.

CHAPTER V.

The first thing I did, after we were left together alone, was to make a third attempt to get up from my seat on the sand. Mr. Franklin stopped me.

"There is one advantage about this horrid place, he said; "we have got it all to ourselves. Stay where you are, Betteredge; I have something to say to you."

While he was speaking, I was looking at him, and trying to see something of the boy I remembered, in the man before me. The man put me out. Look as I might, I could see no more of his boy's rosy cheeks than of his boy's trim little jacket. His complexion had got pale: his face, at the lower part, was covered, to my great surprise and disappointment, with a curly brown beard and moustachios. He had a lively touch-and-go way with him, very pleasant and engaging, I admit; but nothing to compare with his free-and-easy manners of other times. To make matters worse, he had promised to be tall, and had not kept his promise. He was neat, and slim, and well made; but he wasn't by an inch or two up to the middle height. In short, he baffled me altogether. The years that had passed had left nothing of his old self, except the bright, straightforward look in his eyes. There I found our nice boy again, and there I concluded to stop in my investigation.

"Welcome back to the old place, Mr. Franklin," I said. "All the more welcome, sir, that you have come some hours before we expected you."

"I have a reason for coming before you expected me," answered Mr. Franklin. "I suspect, Betteredge, that I have been followed and watched in London, for the last three or four days; and I have travelled by the morning instead of the afternoon train, because I wanted to give a certain dark-looking stranger the slip."

Those words did more than surprise me. They brought back to my mind, in a flash, the three jugglers, and Penelope's notion that they meant some mischief to Mr. Franklin Blake.

"Who's watching you, sir—and why?" I inquired.

"Tell me about the three Indians you have had at the house to-day," says Mr. Franklin, without noticing my question. "It's just possible, Betteredge, that my stranger and your three jugglers may turn out to be pieces of the same puzzle."

"How do you come to know about the jugglers, sir?" I asked, putting one question on the top of another, which was bad manners, I own. But you don't expect much from poor human nature—so don't expect much from me.

"I saw Penelope at the house," says Mr. Franklin; "and Penelope told me. Your daughter promised to be a pretty girl, Betteredge, and she has kept her promise. Penelope has got a small ear and a small foot. Did the late Mrs. Betteredge possess those inestimable advantages?"

"The late Mrs. Betteredge possessed a good many defects, sir," says I. "One of them (if you will pardon my mentioning it) was never keeping to the matter in hand. She was more like a fly than a woman: she couldn't settle on anything."

"She would just have suited me," says Mr. Franklin. "I never settle on anything either. Betteredge, your edge is better than ever. Your

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daughter said as much, when I asked for particulars about the jugglers. 'Father will tell you, sir. He's a wonderful man for his age; and he expresses himself beautifully.' Penelope's own words—blushing divinely. Not even my respect for you prevented me from—never mind; I knew her when she was a child, and she's none the worse for it. Let's be serious. What did the jugglers do?"

I was something dissatisfied with my daughter—not for letting Mr. Franklin kiss her; Mr. Franklin was welcome to *that*—but for forcing me to tell her foolish story at second hand. However, there was no help for it now but to mention the circumstances. Mr. Franklin's merriment all died away as I went on. He sat knitting his eyebrows, and twisting his beard. When I had done, he repeated after me two of the questions which the chief juggler had put to the boy—seemingly for the purpose of fixing them well in his mind.

"'Is it on the road to this house, and on no other, that the English gentleman will travel to-day?' 'Has the English gentleman got It about him?' I suspect," says Mr. Franklin, pulling a little sealed paper parcel out of his pocket, "that 'It' means *this*. And 'this,' Betteredge, means my uncle Herncastle's famous Diamond."

"Good Lord, sir!" I broke out, "how do you come to be in charge of the wicked Colonel's Diamond?"

"The wicked Colonel's will has left his Diamond as a birthday present to my cousin Rachel," says Mr. Franklin. "And my father, as the wicked Colonel's executor, has given it in charge to me to bring down here."

If the sea, then oozing in smoothly over the Shivering Sand, had been changed into dry land before my own eyes, I doubt if I could have been more surprised than I was when Mr. Franklin spoke those words.

"The Colonel's Diamond left to Miss Rachel!" says I. "And your father, sir, the Colonel's executor! Why, I would have laid any bet you like, Mr. Franklin, that your father wouldn't have touched the Colonel with a pair of tongs!"

"Strong language, Betteredge! What was there against the Colonel? He belonged to your time, not to mine. Tell me what you know about him, and I'll tell you how my father came to be his executor, and more besides. I have made some discoveries in London about my uncle Herncastle and his Diamond, which have rather an ugly look to my eyes; and I want you to confirm them. You called him the 'wicked Colonel' just now. Search your memory, my old friend, and tell me why."

I saw he was in earnest, and I told him.

Here follows the substance of what I said, written out entirely for your benefit. Pay attention to it, or you will be all abroad, when we get deeper into the story. Clear your mind of the children, or the dinner, or the new bonnet, or what not. Try if you can't forget politics, horses, prices in the City, and grievances at the club. I hope you won't take this freedom on my part amiss; it's only a way I have of appealing to the gentle reader. Lord! haven't I seen you with the greatest authors in your hands, and don't I know how ready your attention is to wander when it's a book that asks for it, instead of a person?

I spoke, a little way back, of my lady's father, the old lord with the short temper and the long tongue. He had five children in all. Two sons to begin with; then, after a long time, his wife broke out breeding again, and the three young ladies came briskly one after the other, as fast as the nature of things would permit; my mistress, as before mentioned, being the youngest and best of the three. Of the two sons, the eldest, Arthur, inherited the title and estates. The second, the Honourable John, got a fine fortune left him by a relative, and went into the army.

It's an ill bird, they say, that fouls its own nest. I look on the noble family of the Herncastles as being my nest; and I shall take it as a favour if I am not expected to enter into particulars on the subject of the Honourable John. He was, I honestly believe, one of the greatest blackguards that ever lived. I can hardly say more or less for him than that. He went into the army, beginning in the Guards. He had to leave the Guards before he was two-and-twenty—never mind why. They are very strict in the army, and they were too strict for the Honourable John. He went out to India to see whether they were equally strict there, and to try a little active service. In the matter of bravery (to give him his due), he was a mixture of bull-dog and game-cock, with a dash of the savage. He was at the taking of Seringapatam. Soon afterwards he changed into another regiment, and, in course of time, changed again into a third. In the third he got his last step as lieutenant-colonel, and, getting that, got also a sunstroke, and came home to England.

He came back with a character that closed the doors of all his family against him, my lady (then just married) taking the lead, and declaring (with Sir John's approval, of course) that her brother should never enter any house of hers. There was more than one slur on the Colonel that made people shy of him; but the blot of the Diamond is all I need mention here.

It was said he had got possession of his Indian jewel by means which, bold as he was, he didn't dare acknowledge. He never attempted to sell it—not being in need of money, and not (to give him his due again) making money an object. He never gave it away; he never even showed it to any living soul. Some said he was afraid of its getting him into a difficulty with the military authorities; others (very ignorant indeed of the real nature of the man) said he was afraid, if he showed it, of its costing him his life.

There was, perhaps, a grain of truth mixed up with this last report. It was false to say that he was afraid; but it was a fact that his life had been twice threatened in India; and it

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was firmly believed that the Moonstone was at the bottom of it. When he came back to England, and found himself avoided by everybody, the Moonstone was thought to be at the bottom of it again. The mystery of the Colonel's life got in the Colonel's way, and outlawed him, as you may say, among his own people. The men wouldn't let him into their clubs; the women—more than one—whom he wanted to marry, refused him; friends and relations got too near-sighted to see him in the street.

Some men in this mess would have tried to set themselves right with the world. But to give in, even when he was wrong, and had all society against him, was not the way of the Honourable John. He had kept the Diamond, in flat defiance of assassination, in India. He kept the Diamond, in flat defiance of public opinion, in England. There you have the portrait of the man before you, as in a picture: a character that braved everything; and a face, handsome as it was, that looked possessed by the devil.

We heard different rumours about him from time to time. Sometimes they said he was given up to smoking opium, and collecting old books; sometimes he was reported to be trying strange things in chemistry; sometimes he was seen carousing and amusing himself among the lowest people in the lowest slums of London. Anyhow, a solitary, vicious, underground life was the life the Colonel led. Once, and once only, after his return to England, I myself saw him, face to face.

About two years before the time of which I am now writing, and about a year and a half before the time of his death, the Colonel came unexpectedly to my lady's house in London. It was the night of Miss Rachel's birthday, the twenty-first of June; and there was a party in honour of it, as usual. I received a message from the footman to say that a gentleman wanted to see me. Going up into the hall, there I found the Colonel, wasted, and worn, and old, and shabby, and as wild and as wicked as ever.

"Go up to my sister," says he; "and say that I have called to wish my niece many happy returns of the day."

He had made attempts by letter, more than once already, to be reconciled with my lady, for no other purpose, I am firmly persuaded, than to annoy her. But this was the first time he had actually come to the house. I had it on the tip of my tongue to say that my mistress had a party that night. But the devilish look of him daunted me. I went up-stairs with his message, and left him, by his own desire, waiting in the hall. The servants stood staring at him, at a distance, as if he was a walking engine of destruction, loaded with powder and shot, and likely to go off among them at a moment's notice.

My lady has a dash—no more—of the family temper. "Tell Colonel Herncastle," she said, when I gave her her brother's message, "that Miss Verinder is engaged, and that *I* decline to see him." I tried to plead for a civiller answer than that; knowing the Colonel's constitutional superiority to the restraints which govern gentlemen in general. Quite useless! The family temper flashed out at me directly. "When I want your advice," says my lady, "you know that I always ask for it. I don't ask for it now." I went down-stairs with the message, of which I took the liberty of presenting a new and amended edition of my own contriving, as follows: "My lady and Miss Rachel regret that they are engaged, Colonel; and beg to be excused having the honour of seeing you."

I expected him to break out, even at that polite way of putting it. To my surprise he did nothing of the sort; he alarmed me by taking the thing with an unnatural quiet. His eyes, of a glittering bright grey, just settled on me for a moment; and he laughed, not *out* of himself, like other people, but *into* himself, in a soft, chuckling, horridly mischievous way. "Thank you, Betteredge," he said. "I shall remember my niece's birthday." With that, he turned on his heel, and walked out of the house.

The next birthday came round, and we heard he was ill in bed. Six months afterwards—that is to say, six months before the time I am now writing of—there came a letter from a highly respectable clergyman to my lady. It communicated two wonderful things in the way of family news. First, that the Colonel had forgiven his sister on his death-bed. Second, that he had forgiven everybody else, and had made a most edifying end. I have myself (in spite of the bishops and the clergy) an unfeigned respect for the Church; but I am firmly persuaded, at the same time, that the devil remained in undisturbed possession of the Honourable John, and that the last abominable act in the life of that abominable man was (saving your presence) to take the clergyman in!

This was the sum-total of what I had to tell Mr. Franklin. I remarked that he listened more and more eagerly the longer I went on. Also, that the story of the Colonel being sent away from his sister's door, on the occasion of his niece's birthday, seemed to strike Mr. Franklin like a shot that had hit the mark. Though he didn't acknowledge it, I saw that I had made him uneasy, plainly enough, in his face.

"You have said your say, Betteredge," he remarked. "It's my turn now. Before, however, I tell you what discoveries I have made in London, and how I come to be mixed up in this matter of the Diamond, I want to know one thing. You look, my old friend, as if you didn't quite understand the object to be answered by this consultation of ours. Do your looks belie you?"

"No, sir," I said. "My looks, on this occasion at any rate, tell the truth."

"In that case," says Mr. Franklin, "suppose I put you up to my point of view, before we go any further. I see three very serious

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questions involved in the Colonel's birthday-gift to my cousin Rachel. Follow me carefully, Betteredge; and count me off on your fingers, if it will help you," says Mr. Franklin, with a certain pleasure in showing how clear-headed he could be, which reminded me wonderfully of old times when he was a boy. "Question the first: Was the Colonel's Diamond the object of a conspiracy in India? Question the second: Has the conspiracy followed the Colonel's Diamond to England? Question the third: Did the Colonel know the conspiracy followed the Diamond; and has he purposely left a legacy of trouble and danger to his sister, through the innocent medium of his sister's child? *That* is what I am driving at, Betteredge. Don't let me frighten you."

It was all very well to say that, but he *had* frightened me.

If he was right, here was our quiet English house suddenly invaded by a devilish Indian diamond—bringing after it a conspiracy of living rogues, set loose on us by the vengeance of a dead man. There was our situation, as revealed to me in Mr. Franklin's last words! Who ever heard the like of it—in the nineteenth century, mind, in an age of progress, and in a country which rejoices in the blessings of the British constitution? Nobody ever heard the like of it, and, consequently, nobody can be expected to believe it. I shall go on with my story, however, in spite of that.

When you get a sudden alarm, of the sort that I had got now, nine times out of ten the place you feel it in is your stomach. When you feel it in your stomach, your attention wanders, and you begin to fidget. I fidgeted silently in my place on the sand. Mr. Franklin noticed me, contending with a perturbed stomach, or mind—which you please; they mean the same thing—and, checking himself just as he was starting with his part of the story, said to me sharply, "What do you want?"

What did I want? I didn't tell *him*; but I'll tell *you*, in confidence. I wanted a whiff of my pipe, and a turn at Robinson Crusoe.

BOY MONSTERS.

Was it not Yorick who first told us of the famous Vincent Quirino, who, in the eighth year of his age, posted up in the public schools at Rome no less than four thousand five hundred and sixty different theses upon the most abstruse points of the most abstruse theology, which he defended and maintained in such sort as to cramp and dumbfound his opponents? When Mr. Shandy talked of the prodigies of childhood who were masters of fourteen languages at ten, and so forth, and when Yorick said, "You forget the great Lipsius, who composed a work the day he was born"—who but Uncle Toby could have been so judiciously rude as to remark on that last work, "They should have wiped it up, and said no more about it"? But before Mr. Shandy and Yorick were thus erudite upon erudition in pinafores, they had been reading, as I, sad Ignoramus, have been reading since, a terrible book by the Sieur Adrien Baillet, librarian to Monsieur the Advocate-General Lamoignon. It is a French account of Children become Famous by their Studies or their Writings, published in the year of our English Revolution; and a pretty revolution of its own this work, whether composed in the first or last year of its author's life, will make in the head of any one who, like myself, is rather sensitive than sensible. Talk of ghosts! why, the stories in this book have nearly frightened a schoolmaster to death in broad daylight! I lent it him, and might almost as well have put ratsbane into his supper. He read it overnight, and shook in his shoes when he sat at his desk next morning. A pedagogue frowned at him in every little boy upon his form. Where there had been in school one master to fifty boys, here there were fifty masters to one mannikin. My friend Jerkins, the father of a little family, has been rash enough to read this book, though I advised him not to do so, after seeing the calamities it brought on other of my friends. Jerkins, who snapped his fingers at advice, now buries his head in his newspaper at breakfast-time, and dares not comment as usual upon Italian and Irish news, lest the very baby should cry down to him out of the nursery that he is a blockhead who does not know Verona from Pomona, and is all abroad as to the geography of Ballybog.

Justus Lipsius, for example. What person above forty could have looked at such a child without winking and blinking? His friends, Philology and Philosophy, visible in the shape of two white children, visited his mother a few hours before he was born. His benighted parents sent him to three schools, and in each one he was taught out of a different grammar. But from all the three grammars he got nothing that he did not know before. I have learnt to look with awe upon Great Babies. Alexander the Great was, it is said, Great as a Baby. He was taught by Aristotle to sit thinking in his nurse's arms, and used to lie awake of nights, troubled with the philosophy. He received Persian Ambassadors in place of his Papa as soon as he could speak. There are people who doubt this, and there are people who doubt everything, even ghosts—prodigies themselves of doubt upon all things that are prodigious. Will they allow that Tiberius, at the age of nine, delivered a funeral Oration over his deceased Father, and that Augustus, at the age of twelve, delivered a like Oration over his deceased Grandmother; and that Cicero, at the age of thirteen, wrote a treatise on the Art of Talking? Children's tongues will wag, and only a child can know, or be expected to tell us, how it is that they can keep them wagging as they do. For which reason I feel much beholden to Master Cicero, though, being an Ignoramus, I do wish he had not had, even in early years, that hankering for Latin which prevented him from writing in plain English, as a Christian ought. There

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is another prodigy, called particularly the Young One—Pliny the Young One—who not only wrote a Greek Play, but also took a wife when he was but a bit of a boy. Marcus Aurelius, when he was heir-apparent of the Roman Empire, knew, at the age of twelve, all that was in the heads of all the philosophers, and set up for a wise child himself by putting on the philosopher's gown, which he took off at night with his other clothes, when, to air his philosophy, he went to bed on the ground out of doors, with no sort of gown on him or nightcap either. As this young gentleman was heir-apparent, the Police, I suppose, had orders not to tuck him up.

In the year fourteen hundred and forty-five there was a young gentleman without a name exhibited at Paris, who was master of all the arts and sciences, though only just out of his teens. He was a match for all the learned in all forms of lore. It seems to have occurred to his parents that he was as good a monster as a ram with six legs, for which reason they put him in a caravan. At any rate, he was exhibited in Paris, and drew well. Indeed, he became quite fashionable, because it was maintained that he was Antichrist, whom it was worth while to see at any rate, and to pay one's half-crown for the chance of putting down.

Pico della Mirandola made a digest of the canon law at ten years old; and my belief is that, if ever there is to be a digest of the statutes of Great Britain, we had better advertise for able-minded boys of ten, and get the work done in little by sages who themselves are little. Somebody says that Master Pico, by the time he was eighteen, spoke two-and-twenty languages. Michel Verin produced, at the age of fourteen or fifteen, a book of Proverbs in verse. It has gone through various editions, and has had old men for commentators. Christofle de Longueil, from his infancy, read without skipping. He finished honestly every book that he began; however dull, however useless it might prove to be. The prize the boy got for his diligence was that at the age of eighteen he became Privy Councillor and Minister of State to the King of Spain.

In the Netherlands there was a Mynheer Canteres, who had four children, three boys and a girl, each of whom knew everything at the age of ten. As there were not people enough in their own country to pay them all the admiration they deserved, they were taken, as a performing band of brothers, through Germany, France, and Italy, astonishing the learned everywhere. Why not produce a troupe of such erudite babes at the Egyptian Hall, fetching out the wisdom of the stalls, and getting our friends Doodle and Foozle to employ themselves upon the testing of their erudition?

Of the Admirable Crichton I say nothing, except that M. Baillet calls him Critton. But what of that? Did not the great French republic record its admiration of the genius of Schiller by enrolling him among its citizens as Monsieur Gilles? Louis Stella was at the University of Orleans professor of Greek at the age of fifteen, and drew a large concourse of students to hear his elucidations of Greek authors, especially of Lucian and Aristophanes. The university and city of Paris received, in the sixteenth century, an electric shock from a tragedy and two comedies in French, produced by little Jacques Grevin at the age of thirteen or fourteen. He followed them up with such pastorals, such hymns, such sonnets, that Ronsard lost appetite through jealousy. Nicodemus Fischlin was both a Greek and a Latin poet when thirteen years old. Homer was only a Greek poet. Virgil was only a Latin poet. Fischlin was both. Jerome de la Rovère, at the age of ten, collected and published his "Poetical Works." From which we are told we must infer that he had begun as poet when seven or eight years old, and must have been by that time master of Latin, have studied the art of poetry, and formed his taste by a careful reading of the best authors. But what of that? Thomas Zamoyski was not thirteen years old when he thoroughly understood and spoke fluently and correctly the Greek, Latin, Turkish, German, Sclave, and Tartar languages, and was far gone in Arabic. The Spanish dramatist, Lope de Vega, was most anxious to give poems to the world before he could speak. He was griped visibly by the Muses, and before he was strong enough to hold a pen, and learn to write, we are told that he dictated to others verses of his own composition. Monsieur de Peiresc, as soon as he began to speak, was so urgent upon every one for answers to profound inquiries into the cause of everything, that his father found it useless to have any servant in the house—cook, valet, or footman—who was not versed in Latin and Greek, who could not draw, engrave, bind books, describe and illustrate by drawings or plans everything that was likely to be asked after in geology, zoology, and botany. Little Peiresc, at the age of seven, asked for and obtained of his father the sole charge of the education of a little brother two years younger than himself, taking the direction, not only of his studies, but also of the general formation of his mind and morals.

Hugo Grotius was a Latin poet at the age of eight. His friend, Denis Petou, in his infancy did nothing but read books, and was a master of versification at the age of nine. Milton's antagonist, Salmasius, when ten years old, translated the whole of Pindar into verse. Thomas Hobbes at the age of eleven turned a play of Euripides into Latin verse; and Gasper Barthius at the age of twelve translated the Psalms of David into Latin verse of every form. Bonthillier de Rance at the age of thirteen published a new edition of the poems of Anacreon, with notes of his own in Greek; and before he was quite fourteen, Gabriel de Burta published a Latin folio of Universal History, Sacred and Profane.

Fortunio Liceti was no bigger than the palm of a hand when prematurely born at sea. But his father, being a physician, put him in a

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hatching-machine when they came to shore, and produced so fine a result, that his boy, before he was out of his teens, produced a book of no less name than "Gonopsychanthropologia." The young Bignon, again, was described by the preceptor of King Louis the Thirteenth as "an old man of twelve, a consummate doctor in his infancy."

Pascal at eleven years old noticed the sound made by striking a knife on a plate, and that it was not the same sound when the plate had anything under it. This set him thinking, and led to the production of a philosophical treatise. When Samuel Bochart was a child, he read in Hebrew not only the book of the Prophets, but knew also in their own tongue all the commentaries of the Rabbins, and proceeded to learn Syriac, Chaldean, and Arabic. My senses reel. One horror more, and I am dumb. Three years before M. Baillet collected these veracious monster tales to stir the mind of a small boy in his own charge, a volume had appeared entitled "Miscellaneous Works of an Author seven years old. Collection of the works of Monsieur the Duke du Maine, written during the year sixteen hundred and seventy-seven and in the beginning of the year sixteen seventy-eight." His great experience of life caused the works of this little author to consist mainly of "Maxims."

SIR JOHN'S TROUBLES.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER IV.

When Sir John Milson left home to go to Kensington that morning, he did not wish or intend to deceive his wife, or to tell her an untruth. He was bound in honour, as he conceived, to respect the secret which his old friend had entrusted him with, and he was anxious to do a kind turn to two young women who were somewhat dull, very lonely, quite young, and naturally very anxious to see something of London. Had he been a man careless of appearances, he would have walked out in open noon-day with either, or both of these girls, utterly defiant of what people might say or think. If he had been one who rather glories in a certain kind of reputation, he would only have been too delighted to give others cause for surmises and jokes, which, whilst ruining the characters of the Miss Fabers, would have been utterly untrue. But Milson was none of these. He was a true-hearted, loyal gentleman, anxious to do his best towards those entrusted to his care, and yet determined not to tell that which Colonel Laber had insisted should be kept a profound secret. Hitherto he had been exceedingly cautious, notwithstanding the hints and innuendoes of tradesmen and others whom he had employed, or of those who had seen the letters addressed to him at the club in a lady's hand. But on a Monday in the early part of May, before the flower-shows and the concerts begin to attract visitors, the Crystal Palace is not a very likely place at which any one moving in "society" is likely to meet his friends. Accordingly, when it was at last resolved that the young lady who was indisposed should remain at home, and the governess remain to nurse her, Sir John agreed to take the sister down to Sydenham, and felt like a man about to do a good action when he started to walk with her to the Kensington station.

There was not a better nor a kinder hearted woman in London than Lady Fantzle, so much so that her friends and relations were continually imposing upon her in various ways. Amongst other things she was noted for was the fact of her keeping a sort of house of call, at any rate about luncheon-hour, for all the young lads from Eton, Rugby, and Harrow, who happened to be up in London. Many and sundry were the youths who on one pretext or another found their way to Harley-street during the different vacations, and who invariably left "Aunt Fantzle's" a sovereign the richer, and a good luncheon the better, after the short sojourn. The day Lady Milson went to lunch with her old friend, she found no less than three very restless noisy youngsters there beforehand, and Lady Fantzle, for once in her life, not a little put out by the inopportune coincidence of such different persons coming to her house on the same day. "I really cannot help it," she explained to Annie; "my sister, Mrs. Wallson, is so very thoughtless. Her own two sons are at home for Easter, and her nephew is also spending his holidays with them. This morning, without giving me the slightest warning, she sent the three lads over to spend the day with me, as she had gone to show Windsor to some French friends who are in London. It is really too bad. I must keep my eye on the boys all the day, and send them back in charge of the footman at night. They will sit quiet enough when we are in the carriage, but what *can* we do with them at the Royal Academy? They will get fidgety before we have been there half an hour, and I wanted to make a good long day of it."

"Never mind," replied Lady Milson, "I will come to lunch with you on Friday, and we can go then to the exhibition; let us take your nephews to the Zoological Gardens to-day."

"Not for the world, Annie," replied Lady Fantzle; "do you want me to leave one, if not two, of the boys behind in the bears' pit or the tigers' cage? If there is mischief to be had anywhere, or if there is anything to be done which ought to be left undone, the eldest boy, George, is certain to find it out and to do it. I quite dread the responsibility of taking charge of him and his brother even for these few hours. If I had not to go out this evening, I would drive about London until dinner-time, and thus keep them from any possible mischief, but, as it is, my horses could not stand the work."

"I'll tell you what we'll do," suggested Lady Milson, "we'll go to the Crystal Palace. We can drive to the Victoria station; it will be past three before we get to Sydenham; if we remain a couple of hours there we shall be able to keep the boys out of mischief in the grounds, and

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by the time we get back to London it will be late enough to send the lads back to your sister's."

It was thus agreed that their afternoon should be spent in keeping these wild youths quiet by taking them to the Crystal Palace, and thither they repaired, stopping on their way at the India House in Victoria-street, where Lady Milson left a message for Sir John, to say that she was not going to the National Gallery, but that he would find her at the Crystal Palace until half-past five.

Schoolboys seem to have an extraordinary facility of getting hungry at all times. Two hours after eating they are invariably ready again for food. Lady Fantzle knew this, and, partly from her habitual wish to please every one, partly owing to her desire that the boys should not get into mischief whilst under her charge, she proposed, shortly after they arrived at Sydenham, indulging her nephews in a modest repast of ices and biscuits, although little more than two hours had passed since they had risen from her abundantly provided luncheon-table in Harley-street. To this Lady Milson agreed, and the whole party turned into the refreshment-rooms, and sat down at one of the marble-topped tables which always look so cool and inviting in the hottest weather. There were not many persons present at the time, but amongst them was a couple who seemed to be laughing very heartily at something. The lady, who had her face turned towards Lady Fantzle's party, was young, handsome, a very decided brunette, with very fine black eyes, and, although well, somewhat over-dressed. The gentleman had his back to the new comers; presently he turned round, and Sir John and Lady Milson looked at each other.

No matter how innocent or upright in his acts and intentions a man may be, to find himself in the position which Sir John did, could hardly prove other than awkward in the extreme. He had left home in the morning, telling his wife that he was going into the City on business, and expressing great doubts whether he would have time to meet her even at the end of the afternoon in Trafalgar-square; and here she finds him, not only taking his ease at the Crystal Palace, but accompanied by a young, good-looking, and somewhat over-dressed girl. The very fact of finding him how and where she did, added to her already excited suspicions about the cheque-book, was enough to make her think that Sir John had private amusements and companionships which, to a wife, must be the reverse of pleasing. However, Annie was not a woman to let others see that she suspected hidden rocks. To use a somewhat hackneyed expression, she always washed her dirty linen at home. She was, moreover, a woman of great presence of mind, and so a moment's reflection made her equal to the present emergency. "I see," said she to Lady Fantzle, in the coolest way possible, "that Sir John has been victimised into bringing one of those Miss Smiths out to see this place. I'll go and speak to him; for if he brings her over here she'll bother you fearfully." And to the place in which her husband was sitting she went, trusting with good reason to Lady Fantzle's short-sightedness, that the way in which she treated her husband's companion might not be seen by the old lady.

"I have saved your reputation with Lady Fantzle," she whispered to Sir John, in a tone and with a manner which he had never seen her assume before in his life; "don't disgrace me. I have said that your companion is a Miss Smith, the daughter of a friend of ours; keep up the untruth for the present, at least."

During this short speech she never once looked at poor Miss Faber, who sat wondering who the lady with the stern manner could be; why Sir John, who had until now been so gay and pleasant, seemed so much put out; and what the mysterious whisperings could be about. The young lady little thought that she was the innocent cause of very serious misunderstandings between a couple that had lived happily together for thirty years. Sir John went over to speak to Lady Fantzle, said something about being hampered with a young lady who had never been in London before, and then returned to his charge, but in no mood for enjoying any more his day at the Crystal Palace. Miss Faber saw at once that something had gone wrong, and herself proposed that they should return to town at an early hour. Poor girl, her enjoyment for that day was entirely gone.

Sir John, after seeing his charge to the door of her house at Kensington, and making some excuse for not going in, went to his club, and ordering dinner, sat down to think over how he had better get out of the mess which his friend's folly had got him into. Should he at once go home and tell Annie the whole story? That would be the plainest, simplest, and most certain mode of procedure; but would it not be betrayal of the confidence placed in him by Colonel Laber? The latter had made it a particular condition that Lady Milson should know nothing of his story, and would it be right to betray him? And yet how else could he satisfy his wife that there was nothing wrong in his conduct? He knew Annie was a woman of sense, and yet appearances were so very much against him, that he could only clear up his conduct by telling her the whole truth, and this was exactly what he could not do. And yet "something" had to be done—but what? As he sat at dinner, old Colonel Duckson (a bachelor of sixty-five, with the pursuits of a very wild young man of twenty-four, and who believed himself to be barely in the prime of life) came and sat down by Sir John, joking him in a winking sort of way about the "good-looking young party" he had seen him with near the Kensington station that morning. Duckson lived in Kensington, and from what he said it would seem that he knew full well that Milson often visited that part of London, of course giving him credit for a very different intention from the real one which

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led him there. But although worried and annoyed at the stupid jokes of the old boy, Sir John felt still more angry when he reflected that what Colonel Duckson knew was invariably and very quickly imparted to all the Oriental Club, as well as to the leading members of the great Anglo-Indian colony which inhabits the southern parts of Tyburnia and the northern parts of Kensington. He felt certain that before a month was over the very name of the terrace, and the number of the house which the unsuspecting Miss Fabers inhabited, would be known, talked of, and canvassed in every house in London of which the rent was paid by a retired Indian military man or a pensioned member of the Indian Civil Service. He was therefore all the more convinced that it was high time "something" should be done, and yet when he left the club he was as undecided as ever what to do. He put off the hour of going home as long as he possibly could. He read and re-read the Pall Mall Gazette of that evening until he knew it all by heart. He then took up the Globe, saw what that organ had to say against Mr. Bright and in favour of Mr. Disraeli; and by way of being impartial he then read what the Evening Star had to say on the other side. At last the club began to empty, and as he had no possible excuse for remaining longer in it, he betook himself home, hoping that the scene which he anticipated with Annie would be deferred until the morrow.

"Has Lady Milson gone to bed yet?" were the first words he uttered to the servant who let him in, and he put that question in as unconcerned a tone as it was possible for him to assume.

"Her ladyship started for Brighton, Sir John, by the 8.30 train. She heard of her sister being taken very ill, and said that I was to give you this letter," was the reply of the butler, who, although perfectly respectful in his manner, seemed to know, by instinct as it were, that there was something wrong.

"Gone to Brighton?" exclaimed Sir John, who had never before realised what loneliness was, and who felt as if the home of the last thirty years had been broken down at a blow. "Gone to Brighton?" he asked again.

"Yes, Sir John. Her ladyship came home about seven o'clock, said she had heard of the sudden illness of her sister, and did not know where you were to be found, so I was to give you this letter when you came home."

The letter, which Sir John opened when he got to his study, was not a very long one, but it contained an enclosure which annoyed him perhaps even more than the letter itself.

After what I saw to-day, you will not be surprised at my leaving your house, which I feel, as you must, can no longer be my home. I go down to Brighton, and will send you my address when I get lodgings. When people of our age separate, the less scandal it is done with the better. I leave you to make out what story you like, and what money arrangements you deem fit. I do not, and shall not, utter a word of reproach; nor do I wish to write you a sensational letter to attempt to recal you to what you once were. When, after being married more than thirty years, a husband behaves as you have done, he must do so with his eyes open. The enclosed I found to-day on the hall table. I opened it without thinking what I was doing, and find it confirms what I have for some time half suspected, and what to-day at the Crystal Palace showed me was the case. I shall not say another word.

A. M.

The enclosure was written in a large business-like hand, and ran as follows:

35, Little Bride-street, W.C.
May 13, 1865.

WESTERN *versus* MILSON.

Sir. We are instructed by our client, Mr. John Western, of 14, East-square, Kensington, to inform you that he has had several complaints from his tenants in East-terrace respecting the ladies for whom his house, No. 6, East-terrace, was taken in your name. Mr. Western was not aware at the time you took the house that you did not intend to inhabit it yourself. He has found out that neither of the ladies who do live there is your wife, and therefore, without going further into the question, begs that you will consider the agreement which was signed between you for your three years' tenancy of house as null and void, and that you will vacate the same with as little delay as possible. We are further instructed to state that, unless we receive from you within three days from this date a written engagement to vacate the said house on or before the 25th proximo, we are directed to proceed against you in an action of ejectment, but trust you will save us the necessity of so doing. This without prejudice.

We are, Sir, your most obedient Servants,
LANE AND BIRT,
Solicitors for Mr. Western.

To Major-General Sir John Milson, K.C.B.

"Pleasant, indeed," groaned Sir John to himself, after he had read the two letters; "pleasant, indeed, to have all this worry, not being myself in the very least to blame, but for having put myself very much out of the way in order to serve a friend. What is to be done?"

Sir John was not only not a selfish man, but was one who generally saw quickly what was his line of duty, and never hesitated to go through with it, however disagreeable it might be. In the present instance his devotion to his friend, and his determination not to betray the secret entrusted to him, had broken up his home, and would very soon make him a byword in the society in which he moved. To be more than suspected at sixty years of age of doing that which would be condemned in a married man of twenty, and to be accused of what he never was guilty of, were enough to annoy the best-tempered of men. Sir John had, in point of fact, made himself a martyr for an old friend; he had incurred the odium of wasting the savings of his long Indian service, and of wronging his wife in a way for which there could be no excuse, both of which accusations were equally unjust. He slept over the matter,

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and could only come to the conclusion that his London house was the proper place for his wife to live in, and that, until matters were cleared up between them, he would vacate their comfortable home, and try to induce her to take up her abode in town. He therefore at once wrote to her to that effect, saying:

"However much appearances may be against me, believe me when I say, on my word of honour, that I am perfectly innocent of what you suspect. I will only ask one thing of you. Come back here as if nothing had happened. As it seems your determination that we should separate, I am the one who ought to leave our home. I don't wonder at what you have done, all I ask of you is to suspend your judgment until I have time to write a letter and receive an answer from India, when I pledge myself that you will find me perfectly innocent of anything but a somewhat inconsiderate consent to a very foolish request."

To Colonel Laber he wrote differently. After giving him an exact account of all that had happened, he concluded by begging that at any rate to his own wife he might be at liberty to tell all about the two young ladies whose guardianship he had undertaken. "It is utterly impossible for me to remain silent under the present imputation cast upon me," he went on to say, "and you, my dear Laber, are the only man who can relieve me from it. Even if you object to the world at large knowing that these girls are your illegitimate daughters, surely it would do you no harm, and the young ladies a vast deal of good, if at any rate one lady was acquainted with them, and could tender them the assistance and advice which only one of their own sex can offer. If you agree to my telling Annie all the history of which I have had for some months the exclusive knowledge, telegraph to me the word 'yes;' if you still adhere to your determination of keeping the whole affair secret, the word "no" will acquaint me with your decision. But in the event of your persevering in the latter course, I must ask you to find another guardian for your girls, for I must leave England for good. I cannot remain in this country to be pointed at as an old roué, who at sixty years of age is faithless to his own wife, and has taken in his old age to a course of life of which he was innocent during his married youth and prime of life. I will keep your secret if you desire it, but it must be as an exile."

Milson had so much experience of his wife's good sense, that he was hardly surprised, although greatly pleased, when she wrote him from Brighton that his word was quite sufficient for her, and that she would return to London, take up her abode again with him, and wait for the reply to the letter of which he spoke. "Whatever happens," she wrote, "I will never be the first to create a scandal when you assure me that you are not guilty of what the world charges on you. I will not only return to town, but it would be better, if for a time, we were to silence people by being seen more together than ever in public, and I have no doubt that in due time this mystery will be cleared up."

And it *was* cleared up. The telegram from Colonel Laber only reached London a week before his letter, but it contained the word "yes," and that very afternoon Sir John and Lady Milson drove down to Kensington and brought back the two girls and their governess to dinner. The Miss Fabers now go everywhere with Lady Milson, and it is believed that she has written to their father to say that if he will come home, and give up the idea of saving more money for their use, her husband and herself will adopt the girls during their life, and make them their heirs when they die. At any rate, the colonel—now major-general—is coming home, for his name is "up" for election at the Oriental Club, and Sir John Milson is ten years a younger man than he was six months ago. He is, however, of opinion, that had the untimely meeting at the Crystal Palace not taken place, he would not even yet be rid of his troubles; for he never would have persuaded his old friend to allow him to tell Lady Milson the very foolish secret of which he was the unwilling recipient, and the still more unwilling guardian.

EARLY WOOING.

I.

INDULGING in a retrospect,
  My memory discovers
A time, that you may recollect,
  When you and I were lovers.
And, I remember well, you were
  The best of little creatures,
With locks that clustered, thick and fair,
  Round undeveloped features.

II.

Then you, my winsome little Fan,
  As yet were barely seven;
And I a weather-beaten man
  Of very near eleven,
Not much renown'd for anything,
  A stranger to ecstatics,
Extremely fond of cricketing,
  And not of mathematics.

III.

Such sympathy as you would show
  I ne'er encounter'd after;
You wept right sore when I was low,
  When happy, shook with laughter;
When I was punish'd, to my pain
  Such kisses you accorded,
I hoped I should be flogged again
  To be so well rewarded.

IV.

The day was fix'd—that is, I mean,
  We vow'd, with kisses plenty,
To wed, when you were seventeen,
  And I was one-and-twenty.
This sad delay was the result
  Of calculations narrow:
I thought it might be difficult
  To keep a wife at Harrow.

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V.

Full twenty years have pass'd since then.
You're married—more's the pity!
Your husband, worthiest of men,
Has business in the City.
And lots of merry children press
Around the knee maternal,
Whose never-ceasing joyousness
Is not at all supernal.

VI.

And I, on whatsoe'er I'm bent,
From Camberwell to Carrick,
While passing bills in Parliament,
Or bottles at the Garrick,
While lounging on the steps at White's,
Or 'neath Tod Heatley's awning,
Smoking a strong cigar o' nights,
Or mild one in the morning—

VII.

Conversing "horse" with Tattersall,
Or "shooting-coat" with Skinner,
At Naples' public carnival,
At Friendship's private dinner—
Though but an ordinary man,
Pleasure or gain pursuing,
I've ne'er forgotten little Fan,
And Childhood's early wooing.

ITALIAN MEN AND BROTHERS.

Last week a German lady of rank and culture said to me, à propos of the present condition and prospects of Italy, "A liberal despotism is what is needed for these people. They are not to be trusted with self-government. The Italians have absolutely no sense of the 'point d'honneur.'"

It may be worth while at this moment, when so much is being said and written about Italy by declared enemies and—alas! too often—injudicious friends, to set forth a plain statement of facts which have come under my own knowledge, and which set the national character in a favourable light. My object is not to show that all virtue in this land is monopolised by Papalini or Mazziniani, supporters of the "extreme left," disciples of Menabrea, Rattazzi, or Garibaldi. What I believe, and what I desire to make others believe, is simply that, amongst these twenty-five millions of Italian-speaking men and women, there is an amount of human worth not inferior, in proportion to their numbers, to that of any other continental people. And here I must premise that I am well aware that human worth in Italy—at least in some parts of it—exists under conditions nearly as unfavourable to its development as those of a grain of wheat cast upon a stony soil, or sown in sand, or choked with foul weeds. And in *all* parts of the peninsula the soil has been for ages so ill cultivated as to be yet far from having regained its pristine fertility. On the other hand, I know, too, that the human plant must victoriously assert its right to flourish—by flourishing. To nations, at all events, we are forced to apply a portion of the Darwinian theory of natural selection, and say to the peoples, "Only those who *can* live, *may*."

Let us see, then—beginning with small particulars, and leaving to abler hands the task of rising to vaster generalities—how far my friend the German baroness was justified in her assertion that Italians have absolutely no sense of honour. Some sense of honour, some standard of principle, is, I suppose we are all agreed, as essential to a national existence in the great European family, as oxygen is essential to individual human life. A moral atmosphere so foul as to be absolutely without the vivifying presence of conscience, would speedily result in the material as well as spiritual ruin of a nation.

But I maintain that Italians, considering them broadly as a nation, are far—incalculably far—removed from any present approach to such a condition of moral asphyxia.

"In the first place," said my friend, who had recently been making a tour in the south, in Naples and Sicily—"in the first place, they hate this constitutional government, and grumble terribly at the taxes."

Now, I do not know enough of the internal condition of the Neapolitans under the old régime, to be able to form an accurate comparison between the burdens they had to support in the days of King Bomba and his successor, and the present taxes which are levied on them. The means of acquiring such accurate information are at my hand, but I purposely refrain from using them; firstly, because I have no pretension to make this paper a political essay; and secondly, because I am willing, for the purposes of my argument, to admit that the Neapolitans do "grumble terribly at the taxes." Granted. What then? They pay them. The majority, at least, pays the taxes without bloodshed, without martial law, without even a street row. I have heard of a country still reputed to have a foremost place amidst the nations, wherein tax-paying is not yet considered to rank among the few unalloyed pleasures of life. Under what conceivable circumstances can we picture to ourselves the hard-working householders of Manchester or Glasgow, or York or Exeter, so inflamed with patriotic fervour as to hold jubilee meetings to congratulate each other on the occasion of the income-tax being raised a penny in the pound?

Individual men will grumble—especially in Italy, where copious talk is the habitual safety-valve for carrying off peccant humours from the body politic—will grumble and fret, and make disadvantageous comparisons between the "good old times" and the bad new ones. But, nevertheless, there is a sound heart in the great mass of the nation that beats loyally for Italy, and is jealous of her glory and her prosperity—a heart that is noble enough to endure patriotic sacrifices, and tender enough to be pierced by national humiliation.

"But," says the German lady once more, "they are poor creatures. They get tête-montée with enthusiasm, but it turns out like the crackling of thorns under a pot. They cannot last. They have no constancy—no staying power."

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To this I reply that, in the face of difficulties so overwhelming as to make the enterprise to calm on-looking eyes appear sheer madness, men of all ranks and classes, from the well-born, well-nurtured noble, to the humblest artisan and peasant, set themselves to encounter death and danger in the Roman states the other day, and within our absolute knowledge. I reply that of these men, many had already had painful experience of what a campaign really means. I reply that, although there certainly were in their ranks hundreds of enthusiastic boys whose imaginations were excited by immature and romantic dreams of glory, yet it is equally certain there were among them men who perfectly understood what it was they were going forth to encounter; who had known cold, and hunger, and fatigue, and squalid discomfort, and gunshot wounds, in their own persons. Men who had fought in '59, in '66; some even as far back as '48, and who, if they were able to shoulder a rifle, would be equally ready to fight in '68 or '88, or until the cause they have at heart were gained. Whatever we may think of their aim, or of the means they adopt to attain that aim, no impartial spectator of the facts can deny that these men are at least constant to their convictions; and I protest against the injustice of branding a nation which year by year produces such men, as "poor creatures" whose enthusiasm is as the brief crackling of thorns under a pot!

"But then," says the German lady, after some consideration, "I fear it cannot be contested that these Italians are wanting in self respect. They are not humiliated by the idea of being treated like beggars. They will ask alms and accept them without a blush."

Listen.

I have recently become a member of a committee of ladies in Florence, who, moved by the distress resulting from the late disastrous engagements in the Roman territory, have banded themselves together to do the womanly work of alleviating suffering, of ministering to the sick and wounded, of feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked. Such a body must, in the nature of things, be peculiarly liable to be selected as prey by the designing and unscrupulous. Surely if the Italians be so ready to make capital of their disasters, of their wounds, of their bereavements, as is represented, it is to us they will come with every chance of success. Now let us examine a little, not what they may have been supposed by this or that person to be likely to do under the circumstances, but what I am able to testify of my own knowledge they have done. The first case I shall quote is that of Angelo B., a house painter by trade, aged about three-and-twenty. Soon after our committee was established, this young man called one day at the house where we hold our meetings, and demanded to lay his case before us. He was admitted. There entered into a room full of ladies, all of a rank above his own, many of them foreigners, a handsome, manly-looking young fellow, wearing the traditional red shirt, and leaning on a stick. He had been shot in the leg. A bullet had also passed through his right arm, which he carried in a sling. To say that he was easy and unembarrassed is merely to say that he was constitutionally free from the mauvaise honte which would in all probability have characterised an Englishman under similar circumstances. But there was more in his manner than this. There was the consciousness of a cause which he believed in—of a motive which we were, at least, bound to respect, if not to sympathise with. The preliminary inquiries having been satisfactorily replied to, we found that, although furnished with a certificate from a well-known surgeon, he had not a certificate signed by one of the five medical men whom we had named as our referees in all such cases. Then, too, although manifestly incapacitated for the present from following his trade, he was not in so dire a plight that we felt ourselves justified in breaking our rules to assist him.

Suddenly it occurred to one lady to ask if he were willing to *earn* a little money instead of receiving gratuitous assistance.

"I will do what I can," said he, looking significantly at his crippled limbs.

"I have some circulars to be delivered in the town, and will employ you to carry them, if you like," said the lady.

Some of the others demurred. They feared his lameness might be an obstacle. But the applicant himself overruled this objection.

"I shall go slowly, it is true," said he, "but in time—in time, I shall do the day's work."

It was then inquired what daily wages he could earn at his own trade, and on being told this, the lady who had offered to employ him said she would give him half the sum which he could gain at his own trade.

"Does that content you?" he is asked. "Do you think that enough?"

"It is more than enough," he answers.

Surely a very unskilful beggar this!

Angelo B. keeps his appointment, receives a list of houses at which he is to call, and sets forth to deliver his circulars. At the end of the day he returns, having delivered only two or three of them. He has lost the list, and asks for a fresh one. His day's pay is offered him, but he refuses to take it.

"No," says he, "I have not earned it. It is true it was more a misfortune than a fault my having lost the list, but still I have not earned my pay. Let me try again. To-morrow I may do better."

What an incredibly unskilful beggar!

About Angelo B. it is needful to say no more than this: that he satisfactorily fulfilled the mission he was set to do, bringing back upwards of a hundred francs in subscriptions to our treasury, as the result of his quest. He received the price that had been promised him, asked for nothing beyond his bargain, and, with the money thus earned, set off to return to his own dwelling-place, protesting stoutly that he hoped to serve his country better at some future time.

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Another young applicant, whom I will call Carlo D., came to us to ask relief. What he chiefly needed was clothing. This, indeed, is the most general want. Many of the wounded men are unable to leave the hospitals, even when convalescent, for want of the barest necessaries of clothing.

Carlo D.'s father had been an advocate in good practice. The young man himself had received the education of a gentleman. He appeared before the lady who benevolently gives the use of her house for the purposes of the committee, pale, suffering from a frightful wound, and absolutely in rags. So deplorable is his condition, that the Countess M. and her nieces then and there levy contributions on the wardrobes of the gentlemen of their family, and proceed to alter, to cut, and to sew together some garments to protect the wounded boy from the cold.

He stood there silent, gazing from one to another of the kind women who, scarcely less agitated than himself, were endeavouring to supply his wants. Suddenly the poor boy clasped his hands before his face, burst into a passion of tears, and sobbed out, "Oh, I am ashamed! I am ashamed!"

Here is a young heart not altogether destitute of self-respect, I venture to submit! His countrywoman, relating the story with tears of sympathy, strange to say expressed no astonishment at the existence of such a feeling in an Italian breast. She evidently considered it to be a natural ebullition, and one which she perfectly comprehended; which fact leads us, I suppose, to the inference that self-respect is not entirely an exotic in Italy after all! But stay. If it be not self-respecting to acknowledge a benefit, then I must confess that such a humiliating thing as open, ungrudging gratitude does exist amongst these children of the South. If to be ashamed of giving thanks for what one is not ashamed of receiving, to ask surlily, to accept sulkily, and secretly to hate the hand outstretched in charity — if these things be any evidence of self-respect, then, alas! I am bound to acknowledge that *that* kind of independent spirit I have not hitherto found in Italians. Only yesterday, at a full assembly of our committee, a wounded man, who had received succour, craved admission to the presence of the ladies. Of course to ask for further aid? By no means.

For what possible purpose, then? Simply to show himself to them in the decent clothing which they had substituted for his blood-stained tattered garments; to give them the pleasure of seeing with their own eyes the result of their good work, and to thank them for their timely help as best he knew how. Yes; this young man (who had been, by the way, a cavalry soldier in the regular army, and had been discharged as consumptive!) came and stood before us in a square soldierly attitude, and expressed in his mobile Italian face the thanks which his tongue had not courage or skill to utter. Of so poor and base a temper was his spirit, that he actually conceived it to be no degradation to his manhood to appear before these benevolent women in the clothes with which their charity had furnished him!

That the poor help the poor is an old observation, and, I believe, equally applicable to all countries. Here, in Florence, we have met with touching instances of its truth. Many of the wounded volunteers, whose case is not so desperate as to require hospital treatment, find shelter under the roof of friends, themselves so poor as to be obliged to labour hard for their daily bread. Food sufficient to sustain life, and a roof over their heads, is seldom denied to them. Medical care they receive gratuitously at the hands of that profession of healing which honourably distinguishes itself in works of benevolence all the world over. But clothing! There is their difficulty, and in this respect the ladies' committee is able to be peculiarly useful. More than one instance has occurred of an applicant coming to us in a suit of clothes borrowed from a friend, which friend, we were given to understand, was, meanwhile, necessarily condemned to a very close retirement in his chamber! Some one asked me the other day, with a shade of contemptuous incredulity, "Well, but what has become of the clothes these volunteers had before? They did not, surely, proceed to the campaign totally naked!"

Quite true. They were clothed, though probably not well clothed. But garments clotted with gore and mud, burnt by powder, and slashed by bayonet-thrusts, are neither pleasant nor comfortable wear. In many cases the men were taken off the field with scarcely a rag left on them. The *majority* of these volunteers belong to the class which we English emphatically designate as "working men." To a working man in full employ, the purchase of a suit of clothes is matter for long consideration and weeks of saving. To a man who has (whether judiciously or injudiciously I do not here discuss) thrown himself not only out of present work, but out of the *groove* in which he was likely to find it, the acquisition by his own efforts of warm winter clothing is simply an impossibility.

The spirit of the men in hospital, whether here or in Rome, is, by all accounts, excellent. One man, on being asked if he had not suffered terribly in undergoing a severe operation, replied, "Oh, it was bad. But the doctors are very skilful and very quick. The pain is not the worst. The real hardship in hospital is to see your comrades suffer. That is terrible."

Could the bravest British tar who ever fought under Nelson have spoken more manfully, and, at the same time, tenderly? Not that these poor lads are made of the same stuff as Nelson's hearts of oak were made of. Physically, they are smaller, slighter, and weaker. Morally, more impressionable and impulsive. Habitually, less accustomed to measure their lives by a standard of duty. Still there is in them some nobleness which has been brought forth by suffering, and the encounter with death.

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"Danger ennobles," you tell me, "and the men must be poor creatures indeed who will whine about bodily pain, and descant on their physical sufferings after they are over!"

Well, but I am constantly being told that these Italians *are* poor creatures, and, as to the ennobling effects of danger—danger may elicit nobility, but cannot surely create it. From a poltroon, danger will get—nothing but poltroonery. As a specimen of the feeling with which these volunteers are regarded by the mass of their countrymen (be it observed parenthetically that this feeling does not necessarily imply approval of the recent rash invasion of the Roman territory), I subjoin the literal translation of a letter addressed to a lady of our committee, and enclosing the silver medal alluded to. Both are now in our possession. The following is a faithful copy of the letter, merely suppressing the name of the writer and the town whence he writes. The letter itself will best explain why I have deemed it prudent, in the interests of the writer, not to reveal these:

"Honoured Madam. I have not large means wherewith to help my brothers wounded by the myrmidons of the Napoleonic gang, and of the Pope-King of the Roman territory. I was thinking of selling some article or other, in order that I, too, might assist in so patriotic and humane a subscription, when it occurred to me that I possessed the commemorative medal of the War of Independence in 1859, which was given to us by the Signor Bonaparte (*sic*). The said medal being even more abhorrent to me than that of Pius the Ninth—or, at least, quite as much so—I send it to you in order that you may have it sold for the benefit of my wounded brothers before mentioned.

"Receive, honoured madam, the expression of my profound respect.

"Your obliged servant,

"B. B.

"———, 26th November, 1867."

This simple soldier requested us to publish his letter in the Italian papers, under the impression that it would induce many others to follow his example! For obvious reasons we have declined to comply with this desire, although accepting his well-meant gift, which will be purchased *as a curiosity* by one of our committee. The medal bears the names of Montebello, Turbigo, Marignano, and Magenta. It would answer no good purpose to extend the limits of this little paper. It is meant to have—as I have previously stated—no political colour whatsoever. The instances of manliness and good feeling which I have given—and for the absolute truth of which, let me repeat, I can unhesitatingly vouch—are drawn from among the volunteers, for the sole and simple reason that they alone, being totally unprovided for by any public fund, naturally have recourse to private charity, and it is with them, therefore, that we chiefly come in contact.

The above facts do not, of course, prove that the Italians are paragons of virtue, any more than less creditable facts—which, alas! no doubt might be collected in quantity—would prove them to be monsters of vice. But they at least *disprove* the sweepingly contemptuous assertion that there is no good thing to be expected from this people. I have no pretension to exalt the Italians into heroes; but I do most heartily desire that the world—and especially the English world—should know them to be men!

CALLED OVER THE COALS.

A DIRTY, straggling mark on a swampy field, a disused footpath which the coarse grass is rapidly covering, a strip of soil black and swart as the flooring of the wretched cellars in which thousands of poor Londoners pine and die—such is the view which we have driven miles to see. A narrow slip of land, a few feet wide and not many yards long, uncultivated, ugly, and useless, the place is now pointed out to us as worth more thousands of pounds than would buy an estate in the country, or build and endow a roomy block of almshouses. It seems rather dear at the money. Do what you would, you couldn't grow as many vegetables on it the year round as may be purchased any morning in Covent Garden for a shilling; and yet it literally caused the thousands I speak of to be diverted from one set of pockets into another, and that within twelve months from the present time. This dirty pathway virtually settled the great arbitration case between Canal and Coal, and was the final straw which broke the typical camel's back, and made Coal triumphant. The aqueduct overhead, or rather some of the miles of water it is connected with, were, on the one hand, accused of injuring the adjacent coal-pits, and, on the other, held up as agreeable aquatic neighbours, incapable of harm. Coal insisted it was aggrieved, Canal stoutly maintained its innocence, and it was the untoward appearance of a closed-in fissure which virtually gave the crowning point to the victory of Coal. The most sceptical were convinced, when the earth opened at their feet, that there might be something in the allegations as to "workings" being injured, and foundations and roof-trees giving way; and the upshot of it all was that the skilled arbitrators gave a rational verdict, and adjudged Canal to pay damages.

It was in a "hall by the sea," of a very different character to the one advertised, that I saw the arbitrators at work last year, and an uncommonly snug, cozy, profitable business arbitrating seemed to be. "Costs a cool hundred an hour, sir; has been on for a fortnight, and will last for several days longer, believe me. They're all at lunch now; don't begin till ten; always take lunch, "thinking over the evidence," they call it; leave early in the afternoon; stay at the best hotels; have everything that's most expensive; horses and carriages found them, and are paid handsomely into the

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bargain. Only have it here, at Barborough, because it's a pretty place, and in vacation time it doesn't matter to the lawyers where the chambers are in which they earn fees. All the hotels were fighting to have them, but none of the rooms were large enough, so they took this hall at an exorbitant price, and occupy it alternately with horse-trainers, itinerant showmen, and the watering-place band. All the books on the orchestra-table yonder are plans, and maps, and estimates; the mouths of the pits—and precious hungry mouths many of them seem to be—the workings of the shafts, and the direction of the waters, have all been explained, and contradicted, and explained again. The arbitrators look wise as owls, and ask a question now and then, to keep up appearances. One of them, you see, is already listening with his eyes shut, and will afterwards go up to the hotel and, I suppose, go odd man among themselves as to which way they shall decide. Can't please both parties, of course; and as it's not like a prize-fight, where the umpires are battered by the losers, they can sleep with easy minds, take their port after dinner, their sea-bathing in the morning, and be happy."

Thus the sea-side gossip, whose acquaintance I have made at a Barborough table d'hôte, professes to represent the public opinion of the promenade. That any set of people should deliberately set themselves to useful work in this lovely, idle, flirting, scandal-mongering pleasure-place, is to the ball frequenters and promenade loungers so great a marvel that they feel positively annoyed. Industry is resented as a slur upon the habits of the community, and the arbitration party are all canvassed in a cynical spirit by the flaunting damsels and their week-old adorers, who consider Barborough their own.

Many months later, and in a thoroughly coal county, I happen to be told of the fissure in the ground called "the crack," and am asked to remember the "Barborough arbitration, which it settled, you know." It is part of the hospitable routine of the house I am staying at to ride or drive daily, and two friends and myself—after having driven along black roads and pathways, made of what is called "slack" in Derbyshire, and "small coals" in the county we are in—leave "the crack" to the right, and stop at a neat little red house to ask for the sub-manager of the coal-pits. He is away; so we proceed to the pit counting-house, where a young gentleman hospitably insists that we shall go to his lodgings and be refreshed. I now hear it proposed that we shall descend one of the coal-pits, and my strongest emotion is a desire to run away. My two companions represent respectively the qualities of Vigour and Curiosity, and I know there will be little hope of escaping from a long routine of exploration if I once consent to go down. Warily but jauntily, as if opposition were out of the question, I remark, therefore, that "I'll just stroll as far as Yedingham-on-the-Hill, while *you're* down, you know, and will have a sketch of the view ready by your return." Had I proposed something dishonourable or dishonest, I could not have roused a fiercer storm! Why should I break up the party when I'd pretended so much interest in the subject, and the trip had been made to gratify me? Which of us had talked through dinner yesterday, and before the girls (a sneer here), of the Barborough arbitration; and who induced them to drive out to see "the crack" directly he found its history and its bearing on the case. Besides, why should I hold back? What was there to fear? Clothes? A regular pit-dress would be furnished me. Heat, smoke, confined air, accidents? Surely I'd heard of the law of averages, and knew how utterly impossible it was that anything should happen—I shuddered—while we were down. In vain I protested that I didn't want to go, and didn't care to reason upon it. Vigour clapped me on the back; and Curiosity reminded me that I ought not to miss an opportunity of acquiring information. I agreed with a heavy heart to give up my pleasant walk and sketching, and to proceed with the others to our young friend's lodgings in the little town adjacent. A very funny little town we find it to be. Its brick houses are the colour of boiled lobsters, and its roadway the hue of lobsters in their native state. It consists of one empty street, and two rows of back-doors, the houses of which straggle up a steep hill like a company of soldiers in Indian file. One or two women are at the upper windows, summoned there by the strange sound of footsteps; and one artificially black man may be seen in the middle distance coming home to sleep; but there is no other sign of life. The little tavern has not a single lounger at its door. The druggist's shop is drowsiness personified; while its plenteous display of feeding-bottles, cordials, and soothing syrups, is not without its bearing.

The population is at work under our feet, or in bed recruiting after and preparing for night-work of the same burrowing kind. On reaching his home, our host and guide leaves us for a moment, and returns a pantomimic gnome. A tightly-fitting skull-cap of greasy leather, with protections for the side-face, which stick out like monstrously hideous ears, a suit of dark blue flannel, dingy with use and coal-dust, and without either beginning or end, but which seems to have been sewn bodily upon the frame it covers, and a nose and cheeks which are liberally smutted, make the illusion complete; and to say we expected our guide to give a "back-flapper," and disappear in the bowels of the earth, or to take a first-floor window flying, or to suddenly become a "wheel," is to give a very common-place rendering of the high-flown expectations his appearance caused. A certificate, showing him to have passed the Cambridge middle-class examination, photographs of engines and pit-gear, and a well-selected stock of professional books, all bore testimony to the opposite character of

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his pursuits; but there was no resisting his appearance in this new dress, and Curiosity, Vigour, and myself waited open-mouthed for him to begin. This he did very pleasantly and kindly by clothing us in similar fashion to himself, and by preceding us to the pit's mouth. We have, in our new dress, severally become hideous by this time. Vigour looks like one of the "bold smugglers," who have disappeared lately, but who were formerly celebrated for vending choice Whitechapel Havannahs up dark archways, or at the corners of deserted streets. Curiosity has become a scoundrel of the deepest dye—a man upon whose appearance any intelligent jury would convict. And I am worthy of the company I am in.

It is a lovely day, and our courteous young guide—the Gnome—rapidly points out the leading features in the landscape as we skirt the hill lying between the town and the pits. These features are of coals coaley. The country is obscured by smoke. Huge scaffoldings, like mammoth witches' spinning-wheels, spring up to right and left as far as eye can reach, and each denotes a pit's mouth. The mansions seen are the residences of coalowners or their agents, and both the ground we walk upon and the air we breathe are redolent of coal. Arriving at the head of the pit, we are introduced to begrimed men resembling the estimable persons who deliver coals and count sacks upon the pavements of dear London. They are deputy "viewers," foremen, and colliers; and one of the latter says gruffly, "Them as would go down a pit for pleasure would go to" (terrific noun substantive) "for pastime," in reply to my innocent questions as to the condition of the "workings" below.

Meanwhile, Curiosity asks questions of two twins, who are brother viewers, and so much alike that they seem to have studiously blacked their faces to the same extent, for when they smile identical streaks of white are visible. Vigour, who knows all about pits, and is a favourite with the men, whispers some instructions, and, with a mischievous look I don't half like, bids me come with him in the cage. It is too late to retract; besides, I am stung by the contemptuous smiles of the grimy people clustered round us; so, with a quaking heart and as resolute a countenance as I can muster up, I make for what seems to be an infernal machine close by. Curiosity delivers cynical and irritating remarks on my appearance, which I privately vow to avenge, and Vigour first punches me into a sort of ball (I am neither tall nor strong), and then rolling me between his feet, calls "All right" with suspicious cheerfulness. Curiosity, the Gnome, and one twin are with us in the infernal machine, and now my misery culminates. With a tremulous, uneasy motion the whole apparatus descends, and we seem to pass down a chimney which has been recently on fire. The air is hot and suffocating, as if bad lucifer-matches were constantly burnt in it. It is pitch dark. Large flakes of wet soot fall upon my face and hands and limbs, and over and above the close stench natural to the place, my respiration is impeded by Vigour's knees. Meanwhile the stench and heat come athwart us in great gusts until I am sick and faint, and devoutly hoping my tormentors are suffering too, I ask meekly "whether it will be as bad as this all the time." "Half way down," cries Vigour, as we meet another cage in the darkness; and my involuntary "Thank Heaven!" is the signal for exultant chuckles from every one in the cage. A slight shock, which makes me start, a great rattling of chains, the tramp of hoofed feet, lights flashing out from a dense impenetrable blackness, wild shrieks, cries, and shouts from boys, the clank of harness and machinery, come next, and obeying a kick from Vigour, who then pulls me out as if I were an opera-glass, I step into an agreeable quagmire, composed apparently of pounded coal and London mud. We are at the bottom of the pit, and behind those closed doors "the workings" extend round us in every direction, much as if the maze at Hampton Court had been buried underground, and its trim hedges turned into coal. "The first thing," said the Twin accompanying us, a stolid man without much pity or humour, "the first thing is to 'get your eyes,' and we'll go into the cabin for that." A new sort of lamp, I whisper to myself, the last improvement upon Davy, and called "eyes" to denote its usefulness. But it means that we are to become partially acclimatised to the strange darkness before sallying out into it; so still devoutly wishing myself at home, I join the rest. We sit mum-chance in a little kennel, and put our lamps behind us to make the light resemble the pitchy blackness outside. This lasts a quarter of an hour, when we sally out one by one into a subterranean thoroughfare of coal. The tramway at our feet rests on coal; the walls at our side are coal; the roof above us is coal. Burrowing like rabbits, and occasionally stooping double for yards, we arrive at the engine-room, which is as profoundly uninteresting as engine-rooms always are to me. It is humid, greasy, and warm; and bells ring, and "endless chains" are worked, and the pistons shown us, and we say, "Beautiful, beautiful!" as people do when they contemplate machinery they don't understand. Then we are shown "faults"—where the vein of coal has suddenly broken off, and hard stone has taken its place. Then more chains and horses, and shouting boys. Empty and laden trucks pass rapidly to and fro upon the tramway, and the Twin chooses the narrowest part of the dismal path, to favour me with an anecdote concerning some man who was killed last week by meeting a truck unexpectedly, and "getting flattened to the pit-side like a pancake."

But my attention never leaves the demoniacal dark figures who emerge fitfully out of the blackness as if generated by the coal—figures which move lightly, utter wild cries,

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and fall back again into the darkness. I became afraid. I have no hesitation in admitting it, now that I am secure from the strong and practically jocular arm of Vigour and the conceited smirks of Curiosity. Our guide, the Twin, had passed the door of "the cabin," and led us many yards astray before we reached it. Was that reassuring? Was the "I've spent my life in these workings, and never did such a thing afore," put forth with as much confidence as if it were an explanation of the fact, tended to soothe my alarm? Suppose the Twin were to lose his way further on in the pit? Suppose he lost me? Suppose our lights went out? No man, I firmly believe, ever admired the eloquence or dramatic genius of Sheridan with half the fervour I now mentally bestowed upon what then seemed to me his greatest speech—"Descend a coal-pit for the sake of saying you've been down? Can't you say so without going?"

But there is no shirking the programme laid down by Vigour, and we are borne to a fiery furnace next. I don't profess to fully understand its use, for I was too hot and flurried to comprehend the Twin's explanation. It is connected in some way with the purification of pit-air, and with "up-casts" and "down-casts" and "shafts." To be forcibly held before a fierce fire (as if there were any enjoyment or information in being singed), upon which a few bullocks and a moderately sized flock of sheep might be roasted whole, does not aid your comprehension of its use. During this torture, Curiosity stood in a cool corner, and chuckled, "How very interesting!" A couple of hours of unalloyed wretchedness followed. I am neither awkwardly tall, like Curiosity, nor inconveniently broad, like Vigour, but am, I flatter myself, what milliners call "a neat figure;" yet I knocked and bruised myself terribly against chains, and roofs, and trucks. We never stand upright, and occasionally have to wriggle on our stomachs like eels. Here and there we are shown "faults," in which I assume deep interest, having a hidden fear that, if I fail to conciliate Twin and Gnome, they will leave me behind. "Two old men lost here for two days last summer," says the Twin, philosophically; "went to look for them arter the second night missing, and found them sitting quite comfortable, saying "it wasn't much use hollering down here, and they know'd they should be fetched." I learn with a shudder that these men had worked here since their youth, and, clutching Vigour's pea-jacket firmly, I show increased alacrity in obeying the Gnome's monotonous cry, "Come along." A villanous hole, in which you are shut like a trap, and where you inhale every variety of baked stench,—a steep chimney communicating with the pit's main shaft, and in which you feel like a salamander, and from which you emerge as completely "cured" as the finest Wiltshire bacon, is the next form of misery. Following on this, we are shown at the end of one subterranean turning a loose bank of coals like the side of a pyramid, in which we sink to our middle, and up which the Gnome plods with Vigour at his heels, to wave lamps excitedly at the top, and to ask, with exultation, if I saw "the lights," as if a feeble moving glimmer on a section of a London coal-cellar were a spectacle calculated to fill all souls with joy. The stables, containing a really fine set of horses, in good condition, clean, carefully groomed, and comfortable, are shown next; and a thorough-bred, who has been guilty of repeated bad behaviour, and who arrived down yesterday, sentenced to underground servitude for life, is critically examined. These stables are distributed about the "workings," and are chinks in the walls of coal, roomy and well appointed with racks, mangers, straw, and other adjuncts to equine comfort. Horses seldom see daylight again when they are once set down to pit work, but live and die in one round of truck-dragging and tramway-walking, in which the solitary variation is from "fulls" to "empties," and from "empties" to "fulls" again.

Up to this time we have only seen the product of the miners' labours, not the miners themselves. Every moment I expected to find myself in the central coal depôt—which, in my imagination, is a lofty cavern, wherein gangs of labourers are busily at work. After crawling and crouching along the windings, one by one, keeping firm hold of either Vigour or the Twin, I am told to "look at the way the coal is got." It is more than a minute before I discern anything. Then a poor and fitful glimmer, such as might proceed from a glowworm of weak constitution, becomes visible through the intense gloom. A monotonous tick, tick, as from a magnified death-watch, is perceptible at the same time; and then, as we creep nearer, something small and drab, like a white hat-brush, is seen to be moving to and fro in mid air, and keeping time to the ticks. There is nothing else to break the vast black pall we are piercing. The sickly glowworm and the restless hat-brush are but dimly seen, and appear to be at an enormous distance from where we crawl, and at the end of a long vista of coal. The ticks, although sounding sharp and clear, do not prevent our coming to close quarters with the being causing them, while we are still speculating where he is. It was the most curious optical effect I have known, for there was absolutely no transition between what seemed to be a distant view and our almost stumbling over the nigrescent creature at our feet. The glowworm was a safety-lamp, stuck on a ledge in the coal above him; the drab hat-brush was a few inches of flesh near this Æthiop's arms, not encrusted in black, and which naturally moved backwards and forwards as its owner plied his pickaxe and enlarged the cavity he crouched in. The central hall of my imagination resolved itself into a solitary tomb. This was the only miner we saw at work; though the Twin assured us there were some three hundred and fifty in the pit

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at that time, all of whom were engaged like the one before us. Scooping out the coal, and sitting in the place he scooped, chipping dexterously at the ceiling of his cell, so that the droppings fell clear of his own body, he looked like some gigantic fossil endowed with life and struggling to free himself from his stony bed, or a supernatural black hermit digging his grave out of the solid rock. My nerves were a little shaken by the treatment I had been exposed to, and the very disagreeable hours I had spent, and it quite seemed that the fuliginous object before us was something more or less than human—a conviction which only received its death-blow by Vigour borrowing a shilling of me, which the pitman cleverly caught in his mouth, promising, with a hoarse chuckle, to drink our healths directly he came out of this thirsty place.

While sitting again in the cabin before ascending, the pit poet was introduced to us, and immediately recited an apparently interminable poem, of which I only remember these eloquent and soul-stirring lines:

> It was the (blank) day of December,
> The fact I will relate,
> That forty-eight poor colliers
> Went meeting of their fate;

and so on for a hundred stanzas. "Made it himself," remarks the Twin, gravely—"made it himself while he was at work;" and when we proffer a small money gift, it is acknowledged by the strongest blessing it has been my fortune to hear. After holding the coin in his palm and bestowing on it the orthodox expectoration, the poet shouts with a rough genuflexion to the donor, "May You (in very large capitals) Have Ten Thousand weer yer now have One; may Heaven bless yer, and the Devil neglect yer; and (more rapidly this) "may the master of all the camp, and pioneers of (Place Unmentionable) keep with yer! (disappearing from the cabin door into the darkness). Amen." This batch of good wishes, delivered with feverish rapidity, took our breath away, and it was only after a few seconds had passed that we began to ask each other whether we were not so many jackdaws of Rheims, who had been heartily banned rather than blessed. Whereupon the poet, who, we afterwards learnt, was a cracked-brained fanatic, was called back, and repeated, without a single addition or variation, the same words, disappearing as before at the end. Again brought before us, we learnt that the master of "all the camp and pioneers" was meant for Providence, to whose keeping we were fervently consigned. We reach the blessed daylight, "the crack," and the aqueduct, soon after this, and standing at the pit-head limp, blackened, moist, and miserable, I learn that I have been half stifled unnecessarily, and that our going into foul-air chambers, and down warm, hot, unsavoury, and greasy shafts, has been due to Vigour's determination to "give me a treat." Curiosity's smiles betray him as an accomplice. My revenge is in this exposure, and my advice to my readers is—remember what Sheridan said.

THE DEAR GIRL.

By the Author of "Bella Donna," "Never Forgotten," &c.

CHAPTER XXVIII. A WARNING.

It was now coming to the night of the Guernsey Beauforts' ball. These distinguished strangers had indeed taken the best way of silencing the ungenerous and ungrateful who had been feasted by them, and who would yet go about whispering their malignant slanders. Even the upholsterer, who had uttered some threats, and been so disrespectful as to ask for a settlement in a rude blunt way, fiercely and dramatically saying he had a family, and would not be ruined for any people with the clothes of gentlemen on (a rumour had reached him and turned him wild), *he* became repentant, and was grovelling at Guernsey Beaufort's feet. That gentleman received him with a surprising sweetness:

"My poor friend, you cannot help it. I can make all allowances. You must be on your guard. I do not blame *you;* but I wish really you would take away these things of yours; they *are* a little old-fashioned, and if I had listened to advice I should have got everything in your way from my old friend Moisson, at Paris; but I wished to benefit the place I was living in. No matter now; we must get on as well as we can."

"Oh, sir—Sir Beaufore—you overwhelm me," said the repentant upholsterer.

"Not at all. But, I tell you fairly, I mean to be out of your books at once. My agent is coming over here on Friday, and I shall hand you all over to him."

After this, it may be conceived with what alacrity the artisan bestirred himself. The room in the établissement had been sumptuously decorated. Mr. Beaufort's taste was pronounced excellent and charming; no expense was spared, and it was owned that these strange English, after all, had redeeming merits.

There was misery enough in that tinsel-looking colony, yet it may be doubted if there were two such heavy hearts as were to be found in the rooms that looked on the Place. The two women, Margaret and Constance, looked on the struggle that he was suffering from, or rather the hopeless acquiescence that was in his face. Yet they were obliged to affect to see nothing, and his efforts to be indifferent and take interest in what was going on, wrung them still more. Latterly, he had begun to complain of a heaviness in the head. "I dare say it is coming at last; and what a release for you from this feeble, unmanly, infatuated creature, who is ashamed of himself and of his life!"

Margaret had long ceased to reason with him. Her hard, cold features were growing sterner

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every day. She and Constance held dismal conferences over what was nearest to their hearts. "If something only would happen; something one way or the other. Something must and *shall* be decided one way or the other. He shall not be destroyed for her caprice. Let her marry this man at once, in God's name, and remove this curse from among us." One morning, seeing her brother sitting there pale, hopeless, and rapidly gliding into illness or perhaps mental alienation, something like an inspiration seemed to come to her, and she left the room and went out into the street.

It was about ten o'clock, and Lucy was sitting at the window, thinking over a charming dress which lay on a sofa there, a present for the coming ball, which some mysterious enchanter had sent in, saw with wonder the stiff and sad-coloured figure of Margaret West pass into Vivian's house. Nor did it pass out again until nearly an hour had gone by. She could not but notice the change in Margaret's appearance, and she actually saw beyond mistake the look of triumph and defiance that Margaret cast upwards at her window. The little heart fluttered. Her breath began to come and go. "She means me and him some mischief. She would do anything for her brother. What can it mean?"

She would not have been more surprised than was Vivian when the gaunt form of Margaret was before him. She spoke in her old hard, stern way:

"This is the last thing you looked for, I dare say—the last thing I should have thought of; but it has become a duty for me. I have come to ask a favour from you."

Vivian, much relieved, answered, with alacrity, that he should be delighted, and that he was glad she had come to him.

"Don't think my brother has sent me; he knows nothing of this. You see the state he is in—a sensible, strong-minded man, reduced to a miserable pitiable condition by the heartlessness of a thoughtless girl."

"This is the old folly," said Vivian, warmly. "And I am glad you have mentioned it, that we may dispose of it at once and for ever. What is this about heartlessness and cruelty? Put it at the worst, she was a child fresh from school; he a man that might be her father; and even if she *did* change and was a little capricious——"

"I am not come to discuss *that*," she said, coldly. "That mischief is done—whoever has done it. I want to save something out of the wreck. Tell me this, why do you not end this miserable suspense which is destroying us all? How many months has this been going on? You have won her heart, you will tell me. If you *are* such a devoted lover, you would have been married to her long ago. But I believe yours is a soldier's, a garrison love, and it is said in this place you are seeking some excuse for retreat."

Margaret's eye was resting on him to see the effect of this speech. He answered her with a burst:

"As I live, no, no, no! And I will say, also, that you, Miss West, do not believe in what you have said. As for the retailed stories of this place, neither Lucy nor I cares for them."

"Then why these excuses, why this delay, unless"—and again Margaret's cold eye was on him—"unless the shadow of some old love has risen up and come between? Old pledges are awkward. The gossip of this place sometimes travels far; and if there was danger of such an awkward intrusion during the ceremony——"

He walked about impatiently.

"This is going much too far," he said. "I have borne your inquisition too long. Politeness to a lady, and pity for your situation, alone made me bear so much. I must tell you, I do not accept the view of what you call your brother's folly. To me it seems too gentle a name for a spiteful and sour heart; and if he has sent you here to pry into my affairs, or to question me about them——"

"Or," said she, suddenly seizing him by the wrist, and turning him to the light, "could it be *that you are bound to a wife already?* Ah! your face answers me, and I hold the secret!"

If a gasping voice, a blanched cheek, and the trembling arm she had clutched were evidence, then she *had* his secret. But the dramatic start of the situation would have scared many a sober man.

"What terms," she cried, in exultation—"what terms do you make? Or what terms do I give you?—for I can dictate. It is the truth, as I live. You cannot look at me. You are shaking from head to foot. Ah, this explains all—delay, indecision, mournful looks. You cannot speak to me. You cannot falter out your story."

He did falter out, "This is a wild speech of yours. Any one can say such a thing. You are as foolish as your brother."

"Right, right," said she, pacing backward and forward and speaking to him; "words are nothing. We must have proof—proof and facts. They will come—I shall find them. From this hour I shall watch, hunt, prove; to those who watch and search, proof comes of itself. Now I have something to live for. And now I know there is a good and gracious Being over us all. It was an inspiration sent from heaven. I leave you now."

Vivian's manner had of a sudden changed; a sort of desperation was in his face. He crossed over between her and the door. "No; not with this wild story to be sent among the scoundrels of this place. Take care; I shall not have my life and happiness destroyed by a slander sent abroad by a revengeful woman and a rejected rival."

"Fear nothing," she said. "I can wait till the proper time. There shall be no stories, but all facts. I shall watch with delight to see what you will do. You are in a delicious dilemma. Dacres will hold you to your pledge,

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and not give you ten days more. This is retribution indeed!"

He was so overwhelmed by this torrent of words, that he stood looking at the excited woman unable to murmur a word. At last, as she was turning to go, he said, faintly, "You could not be so base——"

"What, it is true, then?" she said, quickly.

He stamped his foot impatiently. "Leave me. I defy you—both you and him. Do your worst. Only take care what a load of sin will be on your head if you drive me to extremities."

Margaret made no reply, but went down smiling to herself. When she was in the street, it was then that Lucy, watching anxiously at the window, though unseen herself, saw the unmistakable look of defiance and triumph. Her heart sank; she knew not why, but she had an instinct that it was associated with that darling casket where she had garnered up her treasure.

For the whole of the day that followed she did not see Vivian, and in the evening, when she did—he had come over—he seemed quite changed, moody and dejected. But he never mentioned the visit that had been paid to him that morning. Harco had gone out to the play —"he wanted a fillip"—so they were alone.

"You have heard some bad news?" said this Dear Girl, not a little disquieted.

"What will you think of me," he said, "when I tell you that I am very wretched?"

"Why?" said Lucy, her eyes swimming with sympathy. "Ah! if you will only tell *me!*"

"Ah, there, there is the worst," he said, passionately; "I dare not. My dear sweet Lucy, up to this time we have been both in a dream, a dreadful dream. We do not know what we have been doing. I have been infatuated. We have been hurried on in a course which may bring ruin and misery on us all."

The alarm and grief in Lucy's face at this strange, unexpected declaration, may be conceived. "Oh! what does this mean?" she murmured; "what have I done? I know! They have been turning you against me. Don't listen to *her*. She hates me; *they* hate me, and would destroy me. Why did you listen to her? I knew she would set you against me."

The handsome face was softened at once. "If it be a dream, then it is a most delightful one. I could wish I might never awake. Oh, if I could only tell you all. But no one can understand—if I had only breathing-time——"

"For what?" said Lucy.

"You cannot understand," he said, sadly. "If I should go away without our being married, you know what would be said. The creatures here would fall on your dear name and tear it to pieces. And your father? Yet, if you only loved me as I love you, you could trust me—you could believe in me. And as I stand here, the sole motive is one for your sake, and for our happiness; no other in the world."

Lucy's face brightened in a moment. "And is that the difficulty? Then why not do so? It will be a dreadful thing for me to lose you; but I trust in you, and *I* love you, and I ask no confidence. I know it is for our common sakes. I shall wait—wait for years, if you wish it; for your life is mine, and your interest mine. The only thing is," and her face fell—"is papa. He *does* mind so much what people say. And," she added, naïvely, "he is so suspicious. But I shall try and bring him over, and I know I shall succeed."

This Dear Girl was so full of confidence, and hope, and trust, that she quite inspired her lover with the same feelings. The air cleared again, the sun came out. The brightest and softest of landscapes lay before them both.

"You are a dear, dear one, indeed," he said. "And, besides, all this difficulty may vanish in a week, a day, an hour; nay, even now I know not what news this day's post may bring us. It is all on the turn of a card."

"And whatever way the card turns," said Lucy, smiling, "I am content. Only tell me *this* much of the secret: has not she, Margaret West, something to do with this?"

His face turned a little pale. "She is a dangerous and a dreadful woman, and, I fear, has found out a way to harass us. But I shall baffle her yet."

CHAPTER XXIX. A CURIOUS DISCOVERY.

Our Lucy, thus wrapped up in the exciting little drama of which she was the heroine, little dreamed how tongues outside were still busy with her fair name. The matrons and virgins who disliked her had grown more than usually virulent—first, because she took the air of propriety; and, secondly, because she had an admirer of substance, and had a chance of being established comfortably in the world, unless Providence interfered to show that the admirer was of the common material of the place—dust, ashes, and decay. They flung themselves on her slight figure; they tore her with their talons. It was agreed, in many a council, that the late proceeding was the most shocking and indelicate and disgraceful that could be conceived. Need it be added that in their keeping the story, whatever it was, had lost nothing; nay, had been distorted, daubed over with colours—the reds made to flame, the yellows to blaze, the whites to stare again? It was so serious, indeed, that Mr. Blacker was shocked, and, as public officer of moral health, felt bound to take official notice of it. In this he was all but encouraged by Mrs. Dalrymple, who had grown quite warm in the matter. "A cold, heartless little thing! The effrontery she looks at me, Mr. Blacker, as she passes us, leaning on that man's arm! She has no heart, I tell you, and she's killing that poor foolish West. He has death in his face."

Lucy, unhappily for herself, contributed to this view; for she really had begun to count Mrs. Dalrymple among her enemies, and could not restrain that look of defiance and resentment.

On the very day, then, of Margaret's visit to Vivian, Mr. Blacker put on a white tie of

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extra stiffness and starch, and set out on public duty to call on Mr. Dacres. Lucy was sitting with her father, who was in rather an ill humour. One of his fits of pettish despondency had come upon him. He was wearing away like a rat in a hole. The curse of Swift was upon him. A man of his gifts and genius shut out in this way from his own walk, with a set of wretched fellows picking up his crumbs! Lucy went through the old immemorial formulas, and soothed, and petted, and reassured with her accustomed earnestness and success. Mr. Blacker entered; and the duty he had come for seemed written in his face. Almost at once he said:

"I want to speak to you a little, in private, Dacres; rather a serious thing."

"What the devil's up now?" said the agreeable Dacres, his face assuming a spiteful look. "What precious news have you got?"

"It is for your private ear, Dacres; so I will ask the young lady, your daughter, to leave us a few moments together. It is really of importance."

"What are you at now?" said Mr. Dacres, scowling at him. "I want no secrets here."

Lucy, however, had stolen off to "poor mamma."

"Now speak out, and have done with it."

"The fact is this," said Mr. Blacker; "some—ahem!—rather unpleasant stories have been going about here."

"Well, you are an original fellow! So you come here laden with unpleasant stories of the place! Much obliged to you."

"It is rather serious, you see," went on Mr. Blacker, not in the least put out; "and it is right you should know. It seems, your daughter and Mr. Vivian went off on an expedition to a fair; and really what they say—in fact, it is only proper you should contradict the stories, or take action in the matter."

"And what are the stories, pray?"

"Well, you know, for a young girl to go off with a gentleman and spend the whole day, and not return till midnight; and, they say, was seen dancing there."

"What liars they are!" said Mr. Dacres, warmly. "And you help to propagate this rubbish. *You're* a charitable minister."

Before Mr. Blacker could reply, the door opened suddenly, and Vivian entered.

"I beg pardon," he said, "but I thought Miss Dacres——"

"You are just in time," said Dacres, taking another turn. "Here's a charming piece of news, brought in by our friend here. It seems there are stories going about as to that expedition of yours to the fair. I look to you, my friend, to clear up all this to the satisfaction of these impudent meddlers, who go worrying themselves with what don't concern them. Tell this gentleman, were you and she dancing on a common platform there?"

"It is quite false," said Vivian, indignantly; "we left before the dancing began. You were there yourself."

"Oh!" said Mr. Blacker, surprised. "Mr. Dacres was there? That is quite a different thing."

"Yes, of course it is!" said Dacres. "I suppose a father can take his child for a holiday, without the low broken-down herd of this place being consulted? See here, Mr. Blacker, I don't at all take it friendly of you, coming here on such an errand. I don't think it concerned you; and, I tell you what, I don't mean to let the matter rest here. To begin, I must have the name of your authority for these slanders."

"Oh, really, I am not prepared——"

"Oh, but really, I am, though. I tell you, I shall go round, and make *you* go round, and contradict this. I say again, who had you these lies from?"

"Common rumour, my dear sir—the common gossip of the place."

"*I* can tell you," said Vivian, calmly. "There was only one person there who could have sent such stories afloat, and only one person who had a motive in doing so. I have learned enough of him lately to know that his malignity would stop at nothing."

"By Jove, Vivian, you've hit it," said Dacres, starting up. "That's the quarter, sir! A mere creeping fellow, and just like his little spite. I'll choke him off! What does he mean by vilifying my child? See here, now, Blacker. I expect you—at once—to go round to all the old women and set this right."

"Oh, certainly," said Mr. Blacker, rather alarmed. "It is only right, and proper, and Christian. You may depend on me."

"I know I may," said Mr. Dacres, grimly.

When Mr. Blacker was gone, Dacres closed the door softly, and looking steadily a moment, said to Vivian:

"This is a nice mess, eh!"

"Leave it to me," said Vivian. "I shall take a decided course with these Wests."

Mr. Dacres had been listening, and regarding him very steadily, as he spoke.

"Very proper and very suitable," he said. "But now that brings us to the point. You see what all this comes to, Colonel Vivian. And to what a pass this shilly-shallying has brought us! I don't see so much harm in this news of Blacker's, because the remedy is easy. So now it's time for me to put a plain question. Vivian, my colonel, what day do we fix for this marriage?"

"I tell you, as I stand here, it is the happiness I am looking forward to, as I am to living out my own life!"

"Oh, of course, I am sure of all that," said the other, dryly; "and the best proof of this, is for you to fix the time."

"I am helpless, I tell you," said he, passionately. "If it was to be this very hour, I would willingly agree; but there is one thing which I cannot tell, and which you must not ask me, which must put it off yet. I know it seems strange, but I have spoken to her. *She* knows me, and understands me."

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"Very good," said Mr. Dacres, slowly. "That will all do very well for her, you know, and all that; but you and I must take a business view of it. Since you don't fix the day, Colonel Vivian, *I* do. Let me see now. Your Duchess of Kent sails on the twenty-third. You will have to leave here on the night of the twentieth, to give yourself a margin for accidents, so on the morning of the twentieth we'll have our little ceremony, and go away snug by the evening boat. Do you see?"

The other remained silent and stupified.

"That's all arranged. Or, if you *do* require time, you don't leave this place, and the Duchess must go without you. You must see, yourself, there can be no trifling in this matter. It has gone too far. You wouldn't like, I know, to be sailing away in your comfortable ship, drinking your duty-free claret below, while my poor little thing is fretting herself out here, with the foul fingers of these scandal-mongers pointed after her. No, no."

Vivian felt that it was not only Dacres who was putting this state of things before him, but his own heart.

"Now see. I don't ask you to say anything," went on Mr. Dacres, "for I know you are a man of the world, and have plenty of sense. Ah! there is Lulu herself, bright as the very morning dew. Ah, my pet, all the world over is busy with your little name."

Lucy, with a little trouble in her face, looked from one to the other. Trials of late seemed to be visiting her life.

"Your amiable friend West," he said, "has been showing his hoof again. But I have news for you, my pet. Papa and Vivian have been talking over something definite, and have fixed on the day when he's to carry off his little treasure, and poor old Harco is to be left sitting over his empty grate. Yes: the twentieth is the joyful day;" and in a low, half-plaintive tone, he began the ecclesiastical refrain:

"Sing ye the joyful day,
All join in praise!"

Lucy looked at Vivian wistfully, but with the light of a secret joy spreading over her face. She saw his face downcast; his eyes on the ground. She said, hesitatingly, to her father:

"We must not hurry, Harco dear—we have so many things to think of."

"And what do *you* know, pray?" said he, turning on her sharply; "or have you been settling this between you? See here, now. I had to speak plainly to our dear colonel a few moments ago, and I must speak plainer still. I don't want to know your secrets or your family affairs; and what, colonel, you call the difficulty in this matter. That's your own concern. Get rid of it, or keep it, as you like. God grant you may! But I can't recognise it. Things have gone too far for that; and if we hear more of it, I can only say it will take a very ugly look, and give rise to ugly suspicions. So now I ask you again, before her, for a plain answer. Will that day which I have fixed as the very latest suit you? Or is it your intention to try and leave this place without fulfilling what you have engaged to do? I say, *to try*."

Vivian's face worked in emotion. Then he looked over at Lucy's wistful face, in which could be seen plainly interest for him and ready sacrifice of herself. She seemed the Dear Girl indeed at that moment.

Dacres went on as though he had a witness in the box: "There is no compulsion, understand—only it must be decided on the spot, sir. I am constrained to give you the alternative. Accept the day, or sail away! Say yes, and you are a true man; say no, or hesitate or shilly-shally, and from this minute you never see or speak to my Lulu again."

Distractedly Vivian turned to Lucy, so gentle, loving, sweet, and beautiful, with an air of sorrow which is at the bottom of all interest. That look decided him, and he answered desperately:

"I agree. Yes, on that day be it!"

"There," said Mr. Dacres, seizing his hand. "You are a true man and a noble man, and a fine fellow, and have taken a load from our hearts. Now see how these mists are all dispelled as a vapour. I merely go out, see all the old women of both sexes, and tell them the glad day is fixed. Where be their stories then? where their gibes? They may paint an inch thick, and welcome. I'll be off at once. As for that viper West, shall I take him in hand, or you?"

"Leave him to me," said Vivian, excitedly. "Don't be alarmed, Lucy dearest, there shall be no quarrelling nor confusion; but he must be warned."

Mr. Dacres then went out, leaving the young ones together. Vivian, for the first time, took that slight figure in his arms, and said, "Heaven send that no ill may come of this!"

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER VI.

KEEPING my private sentiments to myself, I respectfully requested Mr. Franklin to go on. Mr. Franklin replied, "Don't fidget, Betteredge," and went on.

Our young gentleman's first words informed me that his discoveries, concerning the wicked Colonel and the Diamond, had begun with a visit which he had paid (before he came to us) to his father's lawyer, at Hampstead. A chance word dropped by Mr. Franklin, when the two were alone, one day, after dinner, revealed that he had been charged by his father with a birthday present to be taken to Miss Rachel. One thing led to another; and it ended in the lawyer mentioning what the present really was, and how the friendly connexion between the late Colonel and Mr. Blake, Senior, had taken its rise. The facts here are really so extraordinary, that I doubt if I can trust my own language to do justice to them. I prefer trying to report Mr. Franklin's discoveries, as nearly as may be, in Mr. Franklin's own words.

"You remember the time, Betteredge," he said, "when my father was trying to prove his title to that unlucky Dukedom? Well! that was also the time when my uncle Herncastle returned from India. My father discovered that his brother-in-law was in possession of certain papers which were likely to be of service to him in his lawsuit. He called on the Colonel, on pretence of welcoming him back to England. The Colonel was not to be deluded in that way. 'You want something,' he said, 'or you would never have compromised your reputation by calling on *me*.' My father saw that the one chance for him was to show his hand: he admitted, at once, that he wanted the papers. The Colonel asked for a day to consider his answer. His answer came in the shape of a most extraordinary letter, which my friend the lawyer showed me. The Colonel began by saying that he wanted something of my father, and that he begged to propose an exchange of friendly services between them. The fortune of war (that was the expression he used) had placed him in possession of one of the largest Diamonds in the world; and he had reason to believe that neither he nor his precious jewel was safe in any house, in any quarter of the globe, which they occupied together. Under these alarming circumstances, he had determined to place his Diamond in the keeping of another person. That person was not expected to run any risk. He might deposit the precious stone in any place especially guarded and set apart—like a banker's or jeweller's strong-room—for the safe custody of valuables of high price. His main personal responsibility in the matter was to be of the passive kind. He was to undertake—either by himself, or by a trustworthy representative—to receive at a pre-arranged address, on certain pre-arranged days in every year, a note from the Colonel, simply stating the fact that he was a living man at that date. In the event of the date passing over without the note being received, the Colonel's silence might be taken as a sure token of the Colonel's death by murder. In that case, and in no other, certain sealed instructions relating to the disposal of the Diamond, and deposited with it, were to be opened, and followed implicitly. If my father chose to accept this strange charge, the Colonel's papers were at his disposal in return. That was the letter."

"What did your father do, sir?" I asked.

"Do?" says Mr. Franklin. "I'll tell you what he did. He brought the invaluable faculty, called common sense, to bear on the Colonel's letter. The whole thing, he declared, was simply absurd. Somewhere in his Indian wanderings, the Colonel had picked up with some wretched crystal which he took for a diamond. As for the danger of his being murdered, and the precautions devised to preserve his life and his piece of crystal, this was the nineteenth century, and any man in his senses had only to apply to the police. The Colonel had been a notorious opium-eater for years past; and, if the only way of getting at the valuable papers he possessed was by accepting a matter of opium as a matter of fact, my father was quite willing to take the ridiculous responsibility imposed on him—all the more readily that it involved no trouble to himself. The Diamond and the sealed instructions went into his banker's strong-room, and the Colonel's letters, periodically reporting him a living man, were

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received and opened by the lawyer, as my father's representative. No sensible person, in a similar position, could have viewed the matter in any other way. Nothing in this world, Betteredge, is probable unless it appeals to our own trumpery experience; and we only believe in a romance when we see it in a newspaper."

It was plain to me from this, that Mr. Franklin thought his father's notion about the Colonel hasty and wrong.

"What is your own private opinion about the matter, sir?" I asked.

"Let's finish the story of the Colonel first," says Mr. Franklin. "There is a curious want of system, Betteredge, in the English mind; and your question, my old friend, is an instance of it. When we are not occupied in making machinery, we are (mentally speaking) the most slovenly people in the universe."

"So much," I thought to myself, "for a foreign education! He has learned that way of girding at us in France, I suppose."

Mr. Franklin took up the lost thread, and went on.

"My father," he said, "got the papers he wanted, and never saw his brother-in-law again, from that time. Year after year, on the pre-arranged days, the pre-arranged letter came from the Colonel, and was opened by the lawyer. I have seen the letters, in a heap, all of them written in the same brief, business-like form of words: 'Sir,—This is to certify that I am still a living man. Let the Diamond be. John Herncastle.' That was all he ever wrote, and that came regularly to the day; until some six or eight months since, when the form of the letter varied for the first time. It ran now: 'Sir,—They tell me I am dying. Come to me, and help me to make my will.' The lawyer went, and found him in the little suburban villa, surrounded by its own grounds, in which he had lived alone, ever since he had left India. He had dogs, cats, and birds to keep him company; but no human being near him, except the person who came daily to do the house-work, and the doctor at the bedside. The will was a very simple matter. The Colonel had dissipated the greater part of his fortune in his chemical investigations. His will began and ended in three clauses, which he dictated from his bed, in perfect possession of his faculties. The first clause provided for the safe keeping and support of his animals. The second founded a professorship of experimental chemistry at a northern university. The third bequeathed the Moonstone as a birthday present to his niece, on condition that my father would act as executor. My father at first refused to act. On second thoughts, however, he gave way, partly because he was assured that the executorship would involve him in no trouble; partly because the lawyer suggested, in Rachel's interest, that the Diamond might be worth something, after all."

"Did the Colonel give any reason, sir," I inquired, "why he left the Diamond to Miss Rachel?"

"He not only gave the reason—he had the reason written in his will," said Mr. Franklin. "I have got an extract, which you shall see presently. Don't be slovenly-minded, Betteredge! One thing at a time. You have heard about the Colonel's Will; now you must hear what happened after the Colonel's death. It was formally necessary to have the Diamond valued, before the Will could be proved. All the jewellers consulted, at once confirmed the Colonel's assertion that he possessed one of the largest diamonds in the world. The question of accurately valuing it presented some serious difficulties. Its size made it a phenomenon in the diamond-market; its colour placed it in a category by itself; and, to add to these elements of uncertainty, there was a defect, in the shape of a flaw, in the very heart of the stone. Even with this last serious drawback, however, the lowest of the various estimates given was twenty thousand pounds. Conceive my father's astonishment! He had been within a hair's-breadth of refusing to act as executor, and of allowing this magnificent jewel to be lost to the family. The interest he took in the matter now, induced him to open the sealed instructions which had been deposited with the Diamond. The lawyer showed this document to me, with the other papers; and it suggests (to my mind) a clue to the nature of the conspiracy which threatened the Colonel's life."

"Then you do believe, sir," I said, "that there was a conspiracy?"

"Not possessing my father's excellent common sense," answered Mr. Franklin, "I believe the Colonel's life was threatened, exactly as the Colonel said. The sealed instructions, as I think, explain how it was that he died, after all, quietly in his bed. In the event of his death by violence (that is to say, in the absence of the regular letter from him at the appointed date), my father was then directed to send the Moonstone secretly to Amsterdam. It was to be deposited in that city with a famous diamond-cutter, and it was to be cut up into from four to six separate stones. The stones were then to be sold for what they would fetch, and the proceeds were to be applied to the founding of that professorship of experimental chemistry, which the Colonel has since endowed by his Will. Now, Betteredge, exert those sharp wits of yours, and observe the conclusion to which the Colonel's instructions point!"

I instantly exerted my wits. They were of the slovenly English sort; and they consequently muddled it all, until Mr. Franklin took them in hand, and pointed out what they ought to see.

"Remark," says Mr. Franklin, "that the integrity of the Diamond, as a whole stone, is here artfully made dependent on the preservation from violence of the Colonel's life. He is not satisfied with saying to the enemies he dreads, 'Kill me—and you will be no nearer to the Diamond than you are now; it is where you can't get at it—in the guarded strong-

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room of a bank.' He says instead, 'Kill me—and the Diamond will be the Diamond no longer; its identity will be destroyed.' What does that mean?"

Here I had (as I thought) a flash of the wonderful foreign brightness.

"I know!" I said. "It means lowering the value of the stone, and cheating the rogues in that way!"

"Nothing of the sort," says Mr. Franklin. "I have inquired about that. The flawed Diamond, cut up, would actually fetch more than the Diamond as it now is; for this plain reason—that from four to six perfect brilliants might be cut from it, which would be, collectively, worth more money than the large—but imperfect—single stone. If robbery for the purpose of gain was at the bottom of the conspiracy, the Colonel's instructions absolutely made the Diamond better worth stealing. More money could have been got for it, and the disposal of it in the diamond-market would have been infinitely easier, if it had passed through the hands of the workmen of Amsterdam."

"Lord bless us, sir!" I burst out. "What was the plot, then?"

"A plot organised among the Indians who originally owned the jewel," says Mr. Franklin—"a plot with some old Hindoo superstition at the bottom of it. That is my opinion, confirmed by a family paper which I have about me at this moment."

I saw, now, why the appearance of the three Indian jugglers at our house had presented itself to Mr. Franklin in the light of a circumstance worth noting.

"I don't want to force my opinion on you," Mr. Franklin went on. "The idea of certain chosen servants of an old Hindoo superstition devoting themselves, through all difficulties and dangers, to watching the opportunity of recovering their sacred gem, appears to *me* to be perfectly consistent with everything that we know of the patience of Oriental races, and the influence of Oriental religions. But then I am an imaginative man; and the butcher, the baker, and the tax-gatherer, are not the only credible realities in existence to *my* mind. Let the guess I have made at the truth in this matter go for what it is worth, and let us get on to the only practical question that concerns us. Does the conspiracy against the Moonstone survive the Colonel's death? And did the Colonel know it, when he left the birthday gift to his niece?"

I began to see my lady and Miss Rachel at the end of it all, now. Not a word he said escaped me.

"I was not very willing, when I discovered the story of the Moonstone," said Mr. Franklin, "to be the means of bringing it here. But my friend, the lawyer, reminded me that somebody must put my cousin's legacy into my cousin's hands—and that I might as well do it as anybody else. After taking the Diamond out of the bank, I fancied I was followed in the streets by a shabby, dark-complexioned man. I went to my father's house to pick up my luggage, and found a letter there, which unexpectedly detained me in London. I went back to the bank with the Diamond, and thought I saw the shabby man again. Taking the Diamond once more out of the bank this morning, I saw the man for the third time, gave him the slip, and started (before he recovered the trace of me) by the morning instead of the afternoon train. Here I am, with the Diamond safe and sound—and what is the first news that meets me? I find that three strolling Indians have been at the house, and that my arrival from London, and something which I am expected to have about me, are two special objects of investigation to them when they believe themselves to be alone. I don't waste time and words on their pouring the ink into the boy's hand, and telling him to look in it for a man at a distance, and for something in that man's pocket. The thing (which I have often seen done in the East) is 'hocus-pocus' in my opinion, as it is in yours. The present question for us to decide is, whether I am wrongly attaching a meaning to a mere accident? or whether we really have evidence of the Indians being on the track of the Moonstone, the moment it is removed from the safe keeping of the bank?"

Neither he nor I seemed to fancy dealing with this part of the inquiry. We looked at each other, and then we looked at the tide, oozing in smoothly, higher and higher, over the Shivering Sand.

"What are you thinking of?" says Mr. Franklin, suddenly.

"I was thinking, sir," I answered, "that I should like to shy the Diamond into the quicksand, and settle the question in *that* way."

"If you have got the value of the stone in your pocket," answered Mr. Franklin, "say so, Betteredge, and in it goes!"

It's curious to note, when your mind's anxious, how very far in the way of relief a very small joke will go. We found a fund of merriment, at the time, in the notion of making away with Miss Rachel's lawful property, and getting Mr. Blake, as executor, into dreadful trouble—though where the merriment was, I am quite at a loss to discover now.

Mr. Franklin was the first to bring the talk back to the talk's proper purpose. He took an envelope out of his pocket, opened it, and handed to me the paper inside.

"Betteredge," he said, "we must face the question of the Colonel's motive in leaving this legacy to his niece, for my aunt's sake. Bear in mind how Lady Verinder treated her brother from the time when he returned to England, to the time when he told you he should remember his niece's birthday. And read that."

He gave me the extract from the Colonel's Will. I have got it by me while I write these words; and I copy it, as follows, for your benefit:

"Thirdly, and lastly, I give and bequeath to my niece, Rachel Verinder, daughter and only

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child of my sister, Julia Verinder, widow—if her mother, the said Julia Verinder, shall be living on the said Rachel Verinder's next Birthday after my death—the yellow Diamond belonging to me, and known in the East by the name of The Moonstone: subject to this condition, that her mother, the said Julia Verinder, shall be living at the time. And I hereby desire my executor to give my Diamond, either by his own hands or by the hands of some trustworthy representative whom he shall appoint, into the personal possession of my said niece Rachel, on her next birthday after my death, and in the presence, if possible, of my sister, the said Julia Verinder. And I desire that my said sister may be informed, by means of a true copy of this, the third and last clause of my Will, that I give the Diamond to her daughter Rachel, in token of my free forgiveness of the injury which her conduct towards me has been the means of inflicting on my reputation in my lifetime; and especially in proof that I pardon, as becomes a dying man, the insult offered to me as an officer and a gentleman, when her servant, by her orders, closed the door of her house against me, on the occasion of her daughter's birthday."

More words followed these, providing, if my lady was dead, or if Miss Rachel was dead, at the time of the testator's decease, for the Diamond being sent to Holland, in accordance with the sealed instructions originally deposited with it. The proceeds of the sale were, in that case, to be added to the money already left by the Will for the professorship of chemistry at the university in the north.

I handed the paper back to Mr. Franklin, sorely troubled what to say to him. Up to that moment, my own opinion had been (as you know) that the Colonel had died as wickedly as he had lived. I don't say the copy from his Will actually converted me from that opinion: I only say it staggered me.

"Well," says Mr. Franklin, "now you have read the Colonel's own statement, what do you say? In bringing the Moonstone to my aunt's house, am I serving his vengeance blindfold, or am I vindicating him in the character of a penitent and Christian man?"

"It seems hard to say, sir," I answered, "that he died with a horrid revenge in his heart, and a horrid lie on his lips. God alone knows the truth. Don't ask *me*."

Mr. Franklin sat twisting and turning the extract from the Will in his fingers, as if he expected to squeeze the truth out of it in that manner. He altered quite remarkably, at the same time. From being brisk and bright, he now became, most unaccountably, a slow, solemn, and pondering young man.

"This question has two sides," he said. "An Objective side, and a Subjective side. Which are we to take?"

He had had a German education as well as a French. One of the two had been in undisturbed possession of him (as I supposed) up to this time. And now (as well as I could make out) the other was taking its place. It is one of my rules in life, never to notice what I don't understand. I steered a middle course between the Objective side and the Subjective side. In plain English I stared hard, and said nothing.

"Let's extract the inner meaning of this," says Mr. Franklin. "Why did my uncle leave the Diamond to Rachel? Why didn't he leave it to my aunt?"

"That's not beyond guessing, sir, at any rate," I said. "Colonel Herncastle knew my lady well enough to know that she would have refused to accept any legacy that came to her from *him*."

"How did he know that Rachel might not refuse to accept it too?"

"Is there any young lady in existence, sir, who could resist the temptation of accepting such a birthday present as The Moonstone?"

"That's the Subjective view," says Mr. Franklin. "It does you great credit, Betteredge, to be able to take the Subjective view. But there's another mystery about the Colonel's legacy which is not accounted for yet. How are we to explain his only giving Rachel her birthday present conditionally on her mother being alive?"

"I don't want to slander a dead man, sir," I answered. "But if he *has* purposely left a legacy of trouble and danger to his sister, by the means of her child, it must be a legacy made conditional on his sister's being alive to feel the vexation of it."

"Oh! That's your interpretation of his motive, is it? The Subjective interpretation again! Have you ever been in Germany, Betteredge?"

"No, sir. What's your interpretation, if you please?"

"I can see," says Mr. Franklin, "that the Colonel's object may, quite possibly, have been—not to benefit his niece, whom he had never even seen—but to prove to his sister that he had died forgiving her, and to prove it very prettily by means of a present made to her child. There is a totally different explanation from yours, Betteredge, taking its rise in a Subjective-Objective point of view. From all I can see, one interpretation is just as likely to be right as the other."

Having brought matters to this pleasant and comforting issue, Mr. Franklin appeared to think that he had completed all that was required of him. He laid down flat on his back on the sand, and asked what was to be done next.

He had been so clever and clear-headed (before he began to talk the foreign gibberish), and had so completely taken the lead in the business up to the present time, that I was quite unprepared for such a sudden change as he now exhibited in this helpless leaning upon *me*. It was not till later that I learned—by assistance of Miss Rachel, who was the first to make the discovery—that these puzzling shifts and transformations in Mr. Franklin were due to the effect on him of his foreign training. At

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the age when we are all of us most apt to take our colouring, in the form of a reflection from the colouring of other people, he had been sent abroad, and had been passed on, from one nation to another, before there was time for any one colouring more than another to settle itself on him firmly. As a consequence of this, he had come back with so many different sides to his character, all more or less unfinished, and all more or less jarring with each other, that he seemed to pass his life in a state of perpetual contradiction with himself. He could be a busy man, and a lazy man; cloudy in the head, and clear in the head; a model of determination, and a spectacle of helplessness, all together. He had his French side, and his German side, and his Italian side—the original English foundation showing through, every now and then, as much as to say, "Here I am, sorely transmogrified, as you see, but there's something of me left at the bottom of him still." Miss Rachel used to remark that the Italian side of him was uppermost, on those occasions when he unexpectedly gave in, and asked you in his nice sweet-tempered way to take his own responsibilities on your shoulders. You will do him no injustice, I think, if you conclude that the Italian side of him was uppermost now.

"Isn't it your business, sir," I asked, "to know what to do next? Surely it can't be mine?"

Mr. Franklin didn't appear to see the force of my question—not being in a position, at the time, to see anything but the sky over his head.

"I don't want to alarm my aunt without reason," he said. "And I don't want to leave her without what may be a needful warning. If you were in my place, Betteredge, tell me, in one word, what would you do?"

In one word, I told him: "Wait."

"With all my heart," says Mr. Franklin. "How long?"

I proceeded to explain myself.

"As I understand it, sir," I said, "somebody is bound to put this plaguy Diamond into Miss Rachel's hands on her birthday—and you may as well do it as another. Very good. This is the twenty-fifth of May, and the birthday is on the twenty-first of June. We have got close on four weeks before us. Let's wait and see what happens in that time; and let's warn my lady or not, as the circumstances direct us."

"Perfect, Betteredge, as far as it goes!" says Mr. Franklin. "But, between this and the birthday, what's to be done with the Diamond?"

"What your father did with it, to be sure, sir!" I answered. "Your father put it in the safe keeping of a bank in London. You put it in the safe keeping of the bank at Frizinghall." (Frizinghall was our nearest town, and the Bank of England wasn't safer than the bank there.) "If I were you, sir," I added, "I would ride straight away with it to Frizinghall before the ladies come back."

The prospect of doing something—and, what is more, of doing that something on a horse—brought Mr. Franklin up like lightning from the flat of his back. He sprang to his feet, and pulled me up, without ceremony, on to mine. "Betteredge, you are worth your weight in gold," he said. "Come along, and saddle the best horse in the stables directly!"

Here (God bless it!) was the original English foundation of him showing through all the foreign varnish at last! Here was the Master Franklin I remembered, coming out again in the good old way at the prospect of a ride, and reminding me of the good old times! Saddle a horse for him? I would have saddled a dozen horses, if he could only have ridden them all!

We went back to the house in a hurry; we had the fleetest horse in the stables saddled in a hurry; and Mr. Franklin rattled off in a hurry, to lodge the cursed Diamond once more in the strong-room of a bank. When I heard the last of his horse's hoofs on the drive, and when I turned about in the yard and found I was alone again, I felt half inclined to ask myself if I hadn't woke up from a dream.

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE I was in this bewildered frame of mind, sorely needing a little quiet time by myself to put me right again, my daughter Penelope got in my way (just as her late mother used to get in my way on the stairs), and instantly summoned me to tell her all that had passed at the conference between Mr. Franklin and me. Under present circumstances, the one thing to be done was to clap the extinguisher upon Penelope's curiosity on the spot. I accordingly replied that Mr. Franklin and I had both talked of foreign politics, till we could talk no longer, and had then mutually fallen asleep in the heat of the sun. Try that sort of answer when your wife or your daughter next worries you with an awkward question at an awkward time, and depend on the natural sweetness of women for kissing and making it up again at the next opportunity.

The afternoon wore on, and my lady and Miss Rachel came back.

Needless to say how astonished they were, when they heard that Mr. Franklin Blake had arrived, and had gone off again on horseback. Needless also to say, that *they* asked awkward questions directly, and that the "foreign politics" and the "falling asleep in the sun" wouldn't serve a second time over with *them*. Being at the end of my invention, I said Mr. Franklin's arrival by the early train was entirely attributable to one of Mr. Franklin's freaks. Being asked, upon that, whether his galloping off again on horseback was another of Mr. Franklin's freaks, I said, "Yes, it was;" and slipped out of it—I think very cleverly—in that way.

Having got over my difficulties with the ladies, I found more difficulties waiting for me when I went back to my own room. In came Penelope—with the natural sweetness of women

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—to kiss and make it up again; and—with the natural curiosity of women—to ask another question. This time, she only wanted me to tell her what was the matter with our second housemaid, Rosanna Spearman.

After leaving Mr. Franklin and me at the Shivering Sand, Rosanna, it appeared, had returned to the house in a very unaccountable state of mind. She had turned (if Penelope was to be believed) all the colours of the rainbow. She had been merry without reason, and sad without reason. In one breath she had asked hundreds of questions about Mr. Franklin Blake; and in another breath she had been angry with Penelope for presuming to suppose that a strange gentleman could possess any interest for her. She had been surprised, smiling, and scribbling Mr. Franklin's name inside her workbox. She had been surprised again, crying, and looking at her deformed shoulder in the glass. Had she and Mr. Franklin known anything of each other before to-day? Quite impossible! Had they heard anything of each other? Impossible again! I could speak to Mr. Franklin's astonishment as genuine, when he saw how the girl stared at him. Penelope could speak to the girl's inquisitiveness as genuine, when she asked questions about Mr. Franklin. The conference between us, conducted in this way, was tiresome enough, until my daughter suddenly ended it by bursting out with what I thought the most monstrous supposition I had ever heard in my life.

"Father!" says Penelope, quite seriously, "there's only one explanation of it. Rosanna has fallen in love with Mr. Franklin Blake at first sight!"

You have heard of beautiful young ladies falling in love at first sight, and have thought it natural enough. But a housemaid out of a Reformatory, with a plain face and a deformed shoulder, falling in love, at first sight, with a gentleman who comes on a visit to her mistress's house, match me that, in the way of an absurdity, out of any story-book in Christendom, if you can! I laughed till the tears rolled down my cheeks. Penelope resented my merriment in rather a strange way. "I never knew you cruel before, father," she said, very gently, and went out.

My girl's words fell on me like a splash of cold water. I was savage with myself, for feeling uneasy in myself the moment she had spoken them—but so it was. We will change the subject, if you please. I am sorry I drifted into writing about it, and not without reason, as you will see when we have gone on together a little longer.

The evening came, and the dressing-bell for dinner rang, before Mr. Franklin returned from Frizinghall. I took his hot water up to his room myself, expecting to hear, after this extraordinary delay, that something had happened. To my great disappointment (and no doubt to yours also), nothing had happened. He had not met with the Indians, either going or returning. He had deposited the Moonstone in the bank—describing it merely as a valuable of great price—and he had got the receipt for it safe in his pocket. I went down-stairs, feeling that this was rather a flat ending, after all our excitement about the Diamond earlier in the day.

How the meeting between Mr. Franklin and his aunt and cousin went off is more than I can tell you.

I would have given something to have waited at table that day. But, in my position in the household, waiting at dinner (except on high family festivals) was letting down my dignity in the eyes of the other servants—a thing which my lady considered me quite prone enough to do already, without seeking occasions for it. The news brought to me from the upper regions, that evening, came from Penelope and the footman. Penelope mentioned that she had never known Miss Rachel so particular about the dressing of her hair, and had never seen her look so bright and pretty as she did when she went down to meet Mr. Franklin in the drawing-room. The footman's report was, that the preservation of a respectful composure in the presence of his betters, and the waiting on Mr. Franklin Blake at dinner, were two of the hardest things to reconcile with each other that had ever tried his training in service. Later in the evening, we heard them singing and playing duets, Mr. Franklin piping high, Miss Rachel piping higher, and my lady, on the piano, following them, as it were, over hedge and ditch, and seeing them safe through it in a manner most wonderful and pleasant to hear through the open windows, on the terrace at night. Later still, I went to Mr. Franklin in the smoking-room, with the soda-water and brandy, and found that Miss Rachel had put the Diamond clean out of his head. "She's the most charming girl I have seen since I came back to England!" was all I could extract from him, when I endeavoured to lead the conversation to more serious things.

Towards midnight, I went round the house to lock up, accompanied by my second in command (Samuel, the footman), as usual. When all doors were made fast, except the side-door that opened on the terrace, I sent Samuel to bed, and stepped out for a breath of fresh air before I too went to bed in my turn.

The night was still and close, and the moon was at the full in the heavens. It was so silent out of doors, that I heard from time to time, very faint and low, the fall of the sea, as the ground-swell heaved it in on the sand-bank near the mouth of our little bay. As the house stood, the terrace side was the dark side; but the broad moonlight showed fair on the gravel walk that ran along the next side to the terrace. Looking this way, after looking up at the sky, I saw the shadow of a person in the moonlight thrown forward from behind the corner of the house.

Being old and sly, I forbore to call out; but, being also, unfortunately, old and heavy, my

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feet betrayed me on the gravel. Before I could steal suddenly round the corner, as I had proposed, I heard lighter feet than mine—and more than one pair of them, as I thought—retreating in a hurry. By the time I had got to the corner, the trespassers, whoever they were, had run into the shrubbery at the off side of the walk, and were hidden from sight among the thick trees and bushes in that part of the grounds. From the shrubbery, they could easily make their way, over our fence, into the road. If I had been forty years younger, I might have had a chance of catching them before they got clear of our premises. As it was, I went back to set a-going a younger pair of legs than mine. Without disturbing anybody, Samuel and I got a couple of guns, and went all round the house and through the shrubbery. Having made sure that no persons were lurking about anywhere in our grounds, we turned back. Passing over the walk where I had seen the shadow, I now noticed, for the first time, a little bright object, lying on the clean gravel, under the light of the moon. Picking the object up, I discovered that it was a small bottle, containing a thick sweet-smelling liquor, as black as ink.

I said nothing to Samuel. But, remembering what Penelope had told me about the jugglers, and the pouring of the little pool of ink into the palm of the boy's hand, I instantly suspected that I had disturbed the three Indians, lurking about the house, and bent, in their heathenish way, on discovering the whereabouts of the Diamond that night.

THE FRENCH PRESS.

In the year 1631 there lived in Paris a doctor named Théophraste Renandot. This man, an intimate friend of the famous genealogist d'Hozier, was often allowed by the latter to take copies of letters received by him from different cities in Europe. As the genealogist's correspondence was not only extensive, but varied, it occurred to Renandot that what gave so much pleasure to himself might also interest his patients, and whether it was that his faith in pills and potions was meagre, or that he fancied physic would operate better when combined with light doses of literature, tradition reports that the worthy doctor usually paved the way to a prescription with one of his friend d'Hozier's letters. The system worked well, it seems, for Renandot, enchanted, began to dream of putting the famous letters within reach of others, besides the sick, by having them printed. He was well known to the terrible and powerful Cardinal Richelieu, who had already appointed him to several posts of trust and emolument, and he accordingly applied to that great statesman for license to found a public and periodical gazette. Richelieu at once saw of what immense use to the government would be a paper that would spread news amongst the public under the form most concordant with the views of the ministers; he acceded, therefore, with pleasure to the doctor's proposal, and even did more, for he became an active, although, of course, anonymous, member of Renandot's staff. He frequently contributed news, articles upon treaties, capitulations, battles, sieges, and also despatches from generals and ambassadors. Louis the Thirteenth, it is said, became an occasional contributor, too, and this accounts for the great importance attached to the early volumes of the Gazette de France by historians who have written on the policy of the cardinal's government.

The first number of the Gazette appeared in the month of May, 1631, and contains two very curious prefaces—too long, however, to quote in full. The first is a letter to the king, signed by the editor, and couched in the most loyal and deferential terms. Louis the Thirteenth is styled in it, as one might expect, more "glorious than any of his sixty-three predecessors," and Renandot adds that his chief ambition in founding the Gazette is, that all the world should hear the fame of so illustrious and good a monarch. "This journal," says the letter, in conclusion, "is the journal of the kings and powers of the earth; everything in it will be for them, and will have relation to them; other men will only be spoken of in so far as they have acted for the good and glory of their monarchs." This programme has all the elasticity desirable, for every one, beginning with the field-marshal who wins a battle, and ending with the cook who prepares the royal dinners. Each may be said to act, either directly or indirectly, for the good or glory of his king. The thief, even, who acknowledges the might and majesty of regal justice, by putting his neck in the gallows-noose, contributes his mite towards the glory of his sovereign.

The preface-address to the public is in a more free and easy style. After speaking of the estimable blessing to be afforded to letter-writers by the foundation of a gazette which will give them all the news without compelling them to invent, as heretofore, for the benefit of their correspondents, Renandot exclaims, in allusion to the trouble which his work will cost him:

"But you must not think that I say all this to enhance the merit of my undertaking in your eyes. Those who know me can tell to those who do not that I have other and honourable occupations besides that of compiling news. What I say, then, is by way of excuse for the imperfections of my style, if, by hazard, it should fail to satisfy you. . . .

"It is impossible, as we know, to please everybody: soldiers would have these pages be full of nothing else but battles; those who love to plead will look here for reports of lawsuits; the devout will expect of us the names of worthy preachers, or, better still, of good confessors; those who know nothing of the ways and doings of court will clamour to be enlightened on the subject; and if there is a man who has carried a parcel safe and sound to the

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Louvre; a captain who has brought his company from one village to another without loss of life; or a citizen who has faithfully paid his taxes, depend upon it he will be greatly angry if the king does not see his name in the Gazette. . . .

"You must, therefore, have pity, reader; for, if in the fear of displeasing their contemporaries, many great authors have abstained from touching upon the history of the age in which they lived, with what difficulties shall I not be surrounded—I, who undertake to write, not the history of the present century, but that of the present week, and even of the present day?" . . .

After much more in this strain, the editor concludes as follows:

"In one point, however, will I place myself beyond reproach, and that is in my search after truth. Nevertheless, I intend not to vouch for the truth of what I say, for it is quite impossible that amongst five hundred scraps of news, gathered from every clime, there creep not in some statements which will need to be corrected by our good Father Time; but to those who may be scandalised by the sight of some false report, I say, that they may come if they will and rectify the truth by the means of my pen (which I shall offer them), that the public may see the true news after the false, and be thus no longer kept in error."

Renandot's paper had a great success; it was published weekly, and for a long time was the only public journal in France. After the death of the doctor, it was carried on by his sons, and the exclusive right of publishing a gazette was for many years kept as a privilege by his family. The Gazette de France still exists; and, it may be added to its honour, that it is perhaps the only paper in the world that has never modified the colour of its opinions; it remains now, what it was before the great Revolution, devoted to the Bourbons, and a warm supporter of the clerico-legitimate party.

So long as the Gazette de France—interpreter of ministerial opinion—flourished alone, it was useless to make press laws; but during the troublous times that followed the death of Louis the Thirteenth, and inaugurated the long reign of his successor, a few other journals started into sudden life, and the boldness of speech of some of them was such that the authorities, alarmed, began to interfere, and, as may be supposed, with more vigour than courtesy. A few impudent gazetteers were whipped by order of Cardinal Mazarin, and a few more scourged by sentence of the Paris parliament; the first suffered for attacking the court; the last for defending it. On the whole, it was best to keep one's pen in one's pocket in those days.

There was one journal, however—and the smartest of them all, too—upon which neither court nor parliament dared lay very violent hands, and this was La Gazette de Loret (so called from the name of its editor), under the powerful patronage of the famous Duchess of Longueville, sister of the great Condé. This funny little gazette was composed entirely in verse by a poet named John Loret; it appeared once a week, treated of all topics current, political or social, and abounded with gossip, scandal, and epigram; each copy was printed under the form of a letter to "Madame la Duchesse, sœur de Monsieur le Prince," and the honest editor made no scruple of avowing in one of his earliest numbers that he received a pension of fourteen thousand francs from this generous lady.

Here is an extract from the Gazette de Loret:

"Du marché neuf les harengères,
Et même quelques boulangères,
S'assemblant toutes en un tas,
En chaperon de taffetas.
Remontrèrent l'autre semaine,
À sa majesté la reyne,
Qu'elles tiendroient à grand honneur
Si le roi leur faisoit l'honneur
D'aller ouïr vêpres ou messe
Dans l'église de leur paroisse.
À quoi la reyne promptement
Apporta son consentement.
Le lendemain, voulant donc plaire
À cette tourbe populaire,
Le roi à leur église fut," &c. &c.

To our lady the queen there came last week
A motley deputation,
A curious lot, and, so to speak,
The tag-rag of the nation.
Fish-wives there were in taffety dresses
Female bakers (or *baker-esses*),
And many more of like condition,
Who offer'd up a meek petition,
That her Majesty might be pleased to grant
Leave to the king, her little son,
To come some day (they mention'd one),
And hear with them the pious chant
Of mass or vespers, in their parish.
At which the queen in bounty lavish,
The next day sent the little king
To hear the mob their *matins* sing.

Jean Loret's Gazette had a sunny existence of two years; but the parliament, finding, no doubt, that the poet was becoming too witty, forbade him, one morning,

"D'écrire politiquement."

To rhyme on Church, to talk on State,
Or hold on serious things debate.

This makes him exclaim:

"Désormais mes tristes gazettes
Ne seront plus que des sornettes."

My journals now henceforth will be,
Alas! but paltry things to see.

And shortly after his paper expired. Cardinal Mazarin had then re-seized the government of France; order was restored, and the malcontent gazetteers who had been whipped hastened to wipe their pens for fear of worse. We hear little more concerning the French press for the next seventy or eighty years. Louis the Fourteenth was not a monarch to brook much opposition; and whilst newspapers in England were already becoming dangerous weapons in the hands of turbulent Whigs, the Gazettes de

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France, the Mercures Galants, and other Parisian journals in vogue, confined themselves to singing the praises of their king, and larding their columns with the chit-chat of Versailles, Marly, and Fontainebleau.

Things continued very much in the same way throughout the first half of Louis the Fifteenth's reign; but already notions of moral emancipation and enlightenment were beginning to dawn; Voltaire, Diderot, d'Alembert, Rousseau, and Grimm had begun to stir up the public with their bold and novel theories; the Encyclopædia was in course of publication, and by 1750 the press had shown the first signs of its budding power. Twelve gazettes were being published, weekly, in London at that period, and the freedom of their tone roused the French papers to emulation. But the Parisian journalists dared not yet attack the ministers, as was being done in England by Churchill, Wilkes, and others; they contented themselves with assailing the Jesuits, and they could do so with more impunity, as they were backed in their warfare against the hated society by all the parliaments of France. By degrees, however, the gazetteers took courage; stray shafts were shot at times against the farmers-general of taxes, whose shameless extortions were reducing the lower classes to beggary; after the farmers-general came the turn of the disreputable magistrates of the period, who made a traffic of justice, and sold their decisions to the highest bidder; after this it was the beardless field-marshals, like the Count de Clermont and the Prince de Soubise, who were turned into ridicule; and at last the papers directed their pungent wit against youthful prelates, like the Cardinal of Rohan, who were setting such strange examples of godly living to their flocks. So long, however, as they kept within these bounds, the gazettes were but little molested. Louis the Fifteenth, the most thoroughly selfish monarch that ever reigned, cared for not a soul on earth but himself and his "favourite" of the moment. The attacks on farmers-general, magistrates, and bishops, only made him laugh, and the sharper they were the more he relished them. Every one knows the answer he made to Boyer, Bishop of Mirepoix, when the latter complained in the fiercest anger of a satire of Voltaire's against the Church: "you wish me to place the Church under my protection," he said; "but really, my lord, I think the Church is quite old enough to take care of itself."

But much as he might enjoy the discomfiture of his worthless judges, and his equally worthless clergy, Louis the Fifteenth felt no inclination to laugh when the papers, emboldened by impunity, began to shoot at him, at his court, and at the bungling of his ministers. The Duke of Choiseul received orders to act then, and Monsieur de Sartines, the lieutenant-general of police, put a speedy stop to the nuisance. A man named Boctoy was condemned on the 29th of March, 1767, to imprisonment for life, for having published at Nantes two pamphlets, called "Le Royaume des Femmes," and "Les Troubles de la France." René Lecuyer was, in 1768, set up in the pillory, whipped, and then thrown into prison for ten years, for a squib in the Journal des Rieurs upon "Queen Cotillon" (Madame de Pompadour); and just at this time a hundred years ago, three poor wretches were hanged at Reims for some disrespectful allusions, in a local gazette, to his Majesty the King; the gazette being at the same time burned by the hands of the executioner. These severities were accompanied by edicts that enforced laws already made long before, but which had gradually been allowed to fall into abeyance. It became a felony, punishable with death, to publish any book, paper, or pamphlet, not previously revised by the Commission of Censors; these censors were seventy-nine in number, and were divided into ten classes, each of which had a separate branch of literature to superintend. Moreover, the number of licensed printing offices was limited to thirty, and the printers were made responsible with their lives and fortunes for all that was published by them.

This was falling from one extreme into the other; and, as always happens, the excess of rigour defeated its own end. The evil checked in one direction burst out in another, and with redoubled force, because it became impossible to control it. Authors who had anything of a seditious nature to write, sent their manuscripts to be printed in London, Amsterdam, or Geneva, and the books returned across the frontier with all the extra savour of forbidden fruit. On the other hand, secret printing offices were set up in the cellars of private houses, for the accommodation of pamphleteers, libellers, and poetasters, and not all the efforts of Messrs. De Choiseul and De Sartines could stop the flow of rebel songs that daily sprung up, no one knew whence, and circulated through the country by thousands. The only thing to be done, was to wait until some wretched bard was betrayed for a reward (which occurred pretty frequently), and then, after putting him to torture to make him denounce his accomplices, to hang him. But this was of but little practical use. The survivors only grew more cautious, and new rhymers took the place of the dead.

Louis the Sixteenth, who was really a good prince, and desired the welfare of his subjects, tried to put some order in all this, but he went the wrong way to work; for instead of abolishing the "censure," and so uprooting the evil, he only tried to extend its powers, and to make its action more effective. Turgot recommended him to place the press under the common law, and to tolerate free discussion so long as it did not degenerate into abuse; but Turgot was no more listened to on this than on other points; the gazettes continued to be very meek in their tone, from necessity; whilst the pamphlets, on the contrary, abandoned themselves to a recklessness of invective and a licentiousness of speech which pass all belief. It is not astonishing that Louis the Sixteenth fell as he did, when we see the things that were

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printed against him in secret, and circulated openly just before the Revolution; the most levelling of now-a-day demagogues would deem those writings infamous, and would regret that the authors escaped unpunished.

On the 26th of August, 1789, six weeks after the razing of the Bastile, the National Assembly decreed the freedom of the press. On the 17th of March, 1791, the profession of printer was made free, and on the 14th of September of the same year the Constituent Assembly, ratifying the decree of the 26th of August, 1789, proclaimed, "that freedom of speech was part of the birthright of man, and that every one was entitled to speak, to write, and to publish his thoughts, without either restriction or impediment." This was a noble declaration; but we are forced to own, at the same time, that it was premature; men's minds were not yet prepared for such boundless liberty, and the numerous journals that sprung into life at that period (Marat's Ami du Peuple, and the Père Duchesne, especially) indicate too well that liberty to be good and useful should be kept within reasonable and honest bounds.

It is needless, of course, to remark that although the Press was in principle free during all the Reign of Terror, it enjoyed but a very shaky sort of liberty under Robespierre, and was not much better off under the reign of the five "Directors." Camille Desmoulins, the friend of Danton, was beheaded solely for his articles in Le Vieux Cordelier, and countless other journalists were guillotined for much less than that. In 1795, August 22, there was a new decree in favour of the liberty of the press; but two years later, on the occasion of the coup d'état of the 18th Fructidor (4th September, 1797), when the three Directors—Barras, Rewbel, and Lareveillère-Lepeaux—exiled their colleagues, Barthelemy and Carnot, and sentenced fifty-three members of the two legislative bodies to transportation, the press was laid for a year under the supervision of the police, and on the 26th August following this term was prolonged by another year.

The licentiousness of tone in the newspapers had considerably decreased by this time; criticism had become more moderate, and consequently more effective; statesmen began to feel the terrible power that is wielded by a well-conducted gazette, and the Directory, which had been at the best of times but a lame sort of government, grew frightened at the clamours raised by the press for the restoration of its liberties. By an executive decree of the 1st of August, 1799, all the restrictive laws were repealed, and for the next few months newspapers were free to speak as they chose. At first, Napoleon—who, on the 18th Brumaire (9th of November, 1799), had overturned the Directory and established the Consulate—did not interfere with this freedom, very probably because the newspapers were all more or less loud in their admiration of him; but by the commencement of the year 1800 the promulgation of the consular constitution (13th of December, 1799) had somewhat cooled public enthusiasm, and Bonaparte, irritated by the just protestations evoked by his tyrannical administration, issued the decree of the 17th of January, by which all the papers in Paris, with the exception of thirteen, were suppressed. Shortly after, one of these thirteen, L'Ami des Lois, shared the fate for having spoken irreverently of the Institute.

From this date down to that of the overthrow of the Empire in 1814, the press was completely at the mercy of the ministers of police. For a word spoken out of season a journal incurred suppression; and those amongst gazetteers who were suspected of favouring the designs of the royalist or republican factions were thrown into prison without mercy, and left to meditate there until it pleased M. Fouché or M. Savary to release them. And yet (and this was the worst of it) the press was nominally free. The laws of the 1st of August, 1799, were never formally repealed during the Empire, and injured newspapers had, in consequence, no means of obtaining redress when they petitioned against arbitrary grievances. "We cannot help you," the judges were obliged to say; "the law declares you free; if, therefore, you are gagged by the government, it is illegally; you must apply to the emperor." Napoleon, on his side, used to declare, with the best faith possible, that the papers were as free as the air. Some weeks after the victory of Austerlitz he caused the following announcement to be made in the Moniteur: "There exists no censorship in France. We should fall into a pretty state again if a common clerk could forbid the publication of a book, or force the author to make alterations in it. Thought is free throughout the French empire." . . . .

Notwithstanding this bright assurance, a decree of the 5th of February, 1810, restored the institution of the censors, such as they had existed under Louis the Sixteenth; and on the 3rd of August of the same year an imperial order suppressed a few hundred newspapers at a stroke, by establishing that in future there should be but one gazette in each department (except that of the Seine), and that this solitary paper should be under the authority of the prefect. The purport of this law was evident; it placed all discussion under an interdict, and from that moment the Press became virtually dumb. Napoleon grew more reckless as his prosperity increased, and there is something overbearingly insolent in the haughty defiance he hurled at all justice during the years that immediately preceded his misfortunes. One cannot ask oneself, without a feeling of alarm, into what moral condition the French people would have fallen had the reign of this extraordinary man been prolonged. France gained more by his fall than she had ever won by his victories. Austerlitz brought the French a great deal of glory, but Waterloo gave back to them their moral independence.

From 1815 to 1830 the French press underwent various periods of partial liberty and partial despotism, but on the whole—especially

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when compared with its condition under Napoleon—it enjoyed a tolerable amount of free dom. Louis the Eighteenth was a man of ease, who disliked energetic measures, and who, besides, felt that it would be safer to let the liberals declaim openly than conspire in secret. Charles the Tenth was an altogether different character; he was the James the Second of France; conservative, bigoted, and obstinate; he hated the theories set afloat by the Revolution. His one dream during his short reign was to gag the press, and to set things upon the footing of bygone days. In pursuance of this scheme he restored the office of the censorship in 1828, and two years later, encouraged by the counsels of his prime minister, Polignac, signed the famous ordinances of July. The press was, however, prepared for this attack upon its liberties. Rumours of an impending coup d'état had long been current, and the liberals answered this audacious folly as it deserved. On the morning of the 27th of July, 1830, all the newspaper editors of Paris met at the house of the deputy, Casimir Perrier, and voted resistance; the resolution was at once spread, the people took up arms, and in three days the Bourbons were definitively driven from the throne of France, and replaced by a proved liberal in the person of the Duke of Orleans.

By the charter drawn up by the representatives of the people, and sworn to by the new king, Louis Philippe, the press was once more gifted with liberty; but it was enacted that the founders of political newspapers should deposit forty-eight thousand francs into the Treasury as caution money for their respectability, and that journalists should, moreover, be made amenable to the common law for offences of a treasonable character, and for articles of a seditious or immoral tendency.

These restrictions were, however, found too lax, and in 1835, after the attempt of Fieschi upon the king's life, M. Thiers, then Minister of the Interior, passed the laws known as the "Lois de Septembre," which raised the caution-money to be paid on the foundation of a paper from forty-eight thousand francs to one hundred thousand francs, and forbade all discussion of the fundamental principles of the constitution.

The latter clause of this law, we may remark, was never observed at all; the Paris papers discussed and wrangled with as great freedom as those of London, and the good-natured juries before whom press-offenders were tried almost invariably pronounced an acquittal.

But the leniency of Louis Philippe's rule may be conceived by one fact more eloquent than volumes of other proof: the present Emperor of the French, whilst confined in the Castle of Ham, after his attempt at revolution at Boulogne, was allowed to write articles of criticism upon the state of France and the acts of the ministers, and to publish them, unhindered, in the newspapers of the Pas de Calais. We have never heard of such latitude having been granted, in any other land or under any other reign, to a political prisoner.

Louis Philippe's reign lasted, as it is known, but eighteen years, and the adversaries of freedom have always railed at the French press for having made no better use of its liberty than to assail, and finally to overthrow, one of the best of kings (this is said without party spirit) that ever occupied a throne. In our country especially, where it is very common to say that the French are not worthy of being free, a great many people—and sensible people too—point to the Paris papers of 1847 and 1848, and exclaim that the only government suited to France is that of a rod of iron. How much truth there may be in this belief remains for time and events to show; meanwhile, and without expressing an opinion upon the matter ourselves, we must note the steady progress made during the last few years by the French towards the regaining of their political liberties. To assure ourselves of this, we have only to compare the press laws of 1852 with those passed by the Imperial government in the last November session of the Corps Législatif.

By the law of February, 1852, no person, or persons, could found a political newspaper (*i.e.* a paper giving political news) without the special authorisation of the Minister of the Interior. The minister could give or refuse the license as he pleased, without alleging his reasons.

If leave were given, the proprietors were obliged to pay fifty thousand francs into the Treasury as surety for the fines the newspaper might incur.

Every political paper was subjected to a tax of six centimes per copy and per sheet of sixty centimètres square. This made it impossible to sell a political newspaper for less than fifteen centimes, or three halfpence English, although French newspapers are but half the size of our London daily journals. The duty upon a paper like the Standard, the Star, or the Telegraph would be twelve centimes, or one penny three farthings; what is sold in our country for a penny would therefore cost threepence in France. As for the Times, with its colossal advertisement sheet, it would be taxed at threepence a copy; and granting that the circulation of the paper would be reduced in consequence to twenty thousand copies a day, the company at Printing-house-square would pay a duty of two hundred and fifty pounds per diem, or seventy-seven thousand five hundred pounds a year!

For attacks against the sovereign, the ministers, the clergy, magistrates, or against any one in office—for false news—for too sharp criticisms of any official act—for anything, in short, displeasing to the Minister of the Interior, a newspaper was liable to an "admonition" (avertissement); after two admonitions it became amenable to a suspension of two months, and after that to arbitrary suppression. There was no appeal in such cases; the minister's will

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was supreme law, and there was no resisting it. If the government preferred, however, it could punish otherwise than by admonitions; it could prosecute a newspaper criminally (in the person of the editor, of the printer, and the writer of an offending article) before the Sixth Chamber of Correctional Police, and under the indictment of "exciting the citizens to hatred or contempt of the government." Printer, editor, and journalist were all three liable, under such a charge, to fine and imprisonment. The fine might vary between fifty francs and ten thousand francs (two pounds and four hundred pounds); the imprisonment, from seven days to two years. There was no jury for press trials, and a prosecution was therefore almost certain to entail a conviction. During the fifteen years that have elapsed since the establishment of the Second Empire, there have been, perhaps, a couple of hundred journalists prosecuted for boldness of speech in the different towns of France; but it is a melancholy fact that "not a single one of them has ever been acquitted."

Any literary paper making even an accidental allusion to politics, incurred immediate suppression, and its editor was invariably sentenced to at least a month's imprisonment (under the heading "politics" are included political and social economy, and all questions relating to duties, taxes, or government generally). None but political papers were allowed to publish advertisements: the infraction of this law entailed the suppression of the paper, and the imprisonment of the editor, with a fine in addition. No article could be published in a political paper without the signature either of the writer or of the editor, who became de facto responsible for its contents.

In the case of non-political papers, it was the editor, and not the writer of an offending article, who was responsible. This anomaly led to some deplorable results, as in the instance of the Evènement, which was suppressed in October, 1866, for touching upon a question of social economy, and the editor of which, M. H. de Villemessant, was condemned to a month's imprisonment for an article written by M. Alphonse Duchesne whilst he (M. de Villemessant) was absent from Paris!

Finally, the law of 1852 empowered the Minister of the Interior to order the seizure of any paper he chose, and to interdict its sale in the public thoroughfares for any length of time he pleased, and under any pretext—that is to say, the minister could ruin a paper, without let or hindrance, at his sole pleasure.

The new laws in some degree soften these pitiless regulations. It is now possible to found a paper without obtaining ministerial leave; the duty upon journals is reduced from six centimes to five centimes per copy. The system of admonitions is abolished; and journalists indicted for press offences are no longer liable to imprisonment, but are amenable to fines and to interdiction of political rights (that is, right of voting for, or being elected to, the Corps Législatif and the Municipal Councils) for five years.

The condition of French papers are still the reverse of enviable. Interdiction of political rights for five years may blast a man's entire career. However, there is no denying that there is progress in these laws; the imperial government has taken a step in the right direction: one step, too, if prudently taken, may lead to another; and by degrees, by a few more such little steps, the French people, if cautious and steady, will reach their great goal, Liberty!

ANOTHER SPECIES OF OFFICIAL MIDGE.*

It appears, by the Foreign Office List, that we appoint, in different parts of the world, about one hundred consular judges, who have no knowledge of the laws they administer. Some of them are Englishmen, some are foreigners, some paid, some unpaid, but all alike in this respect, that they are invested with judicial functions without being in any way fitted to perform them. They have no definite principle or regulations to guide them beyond some confused and contradictory instructions from the Foreign Office, composed by certain clerks. These clerks have never received any legal education, nor been employed in any manner whatsoever in the countries for which they legislate; and, nevertheless, to those clerks all cases of appeal must be ultimately referred as a last resort in case of injustice. In the places where these judgeships exist there is no public opinion. There are no newspapers. Anything and everything may be done in a corner. We have habitually sent out there, to act as judges of thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow-countrymen in civil and criminal cases, men who could not understand one word of the depositions submitted to them. Sometimes we have pitched upon a bankrupt merchant, sometimes a domestic servant, sometimes upon a man who could sing a cheerful song, and sometimes upon a spirit-rapper. Let there be no mistake or misunderstanding as to who are the people who nominate such candidates to these judgeships. They are the Assistant Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and the Foreign Office agents, who, for many years past, have kept the patronage of the diplomatic and consular services so completely in their hands, that, on a recent appointment, worth exactly five thousand one hundred pounds a year, the chief merit of the candidate (who had never been heard of before) was that he "had acquired the confidence of the office"—by which, in plain English, may be meant the friendship of the clerks above mentioned.

It cannot, perhaps, be justly said that for such friendship a charge is made of from one to two per cent; but, in reality, the servants of

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* See MIDGES IN OFFICE, page 31 of the present volume.

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the British Crown abroad have been mulcted in that ratio out of their salaries. Those who have resisted the exaction do not, somehow, get on in the service. The Foreign Office agents levy a toll upon almost every shilling spent by the nation for the maintenance of the dignity of the British crown in foreign countires. It has been publicly stated in the Morning Post, and it has not been denied, that the right to levy these tolls was transferred from one clerk to another by a regular business circular sent round to his customers. This was not done by a few underpaid juniors requiring to eke out a slender salary to support their families. It was done by the chief men in the office, whom it was professional ruin to any member of the diplomatic and consular services to disobey or to offend. The last known transaction of the kind was the disposal of the large banking and agency business of the assistant under-secretary to one of the senior clerks. This business consists chiefly in receiving and transmitting the salaries of officers in the service who are employed abroad, and turns the modest salaries of those who profit by it from hundreds into thousands.

The Political Under-Secretary being always a new man, knowing nothing of "the office" routine, and the Permanent Under-Secretary being chiefly occupied at the Privy Council, we are informed by the Foreign Office List that the Assistant Under-Secretary superintends all "correspondence with her Majesty's ministers and consuls abroad (except in China, Japan, and Siam); with the representatives of foreign powers in England, the Board of Trade, and other departments of her Majesty's government, as well as with commercial associations, &c., on matters strictly commercial; correspondence with her Majesty's consuls-general and consuls in all parts of the world, and management of all matters relating to the consular service; domestic arrangements and 'financial business of the office' (including, it is presumed, the agency and banking trade) at home and abroad; foreign ministers' privileges; preparation of consular commissions and exequeators, and issue of passports; correspondence on all matters relating to the suppression of the slave-trade; Austria, Bavaria, Belgium, Denmark, Hanse Towns, Netherlands, Prussia, Sweden, Wurtemberg; custody and registry of the MS. correspondence, treaties and printed books; preparation of memoranda on historical events; international cases; treaty questions, &c.; compilation of British and foreign state papers (including, of course, the Abyssinian garbled blue-books); correspondence on matters relating to the Public Record Office; and, once more again, treaties, full powers, commissions, other than consular credentials, royal letters, British and foreign orders, medals and honorary rewards, questions of ceremonial and precedence."

We are not responsible for the arrangement, grammar, or anything else about this document. We quote it as it stands in page 9 of the Foreign Office List. We learn from it what are a few of the duties of this gentleman, who has never during his whole life put his foot, officially, on any foreign soil. We learn also by what means and by whom the Abyssinian blue-books were prepared, and the Queen's letter suppressed without the knowledge of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (as openly stated in parliament), just in the same manner as the private agency had been transferred without the knowledge of Lord Malmesbury; and we know how and by whom we are taxed one penny on our present incomes, with a near prospect of twopence.

Another permanent official, who has only been abroad for a few months in the early part of the reign of William the Fourth, in 1831-2, and never since, but for the luckless trip with Lord Russell to Vienna in 1855, has his share of work; for he is ostentatiously declared to superintend in person, without even the convenient fiction of a lay figure in the shape of a perfectly unconscious political colleague, all the affairs with this country of the "Argentine Confederation, Bolivia, Brazils, Central America, Chili, Columbia, Equator, Haiti, Mexico, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay, Venezuela;" France, Italy, *Madagascar* (exquisite harmony of thought!), Switzerland, and *miscellaneous!* Barbary States, Egypt, Greece, Persia, Russia, and Turkey, China, Japan, Siam, and *United States.*"*

The bondholders of the Central American states will be glad to understand clearly the extent of their obligations to this gentleman; and parliament will be glad to learn what it owes to his colleague; for, as Lord Stanley and Mr. Layard have both denied that they could control the affairs of "the office," it is clear that everything must be in the hands of these gentlemen, and the permanent subordinates.

It would be well for England if these gentlemen were content even with the power of declaring war and adding to the income-tax; but, unhappily for our trade, they have authorised the wildest system of commercial taxes and taxes on shipping ever devised. It appears from the Consular Fee Table in the Foreign Office List that no less than thirty-nine fees, and endless subdivisions and repetitions of those fees under other names, may be levied upon every British vessel which trades beyond the seas to any foreign port whatever. No British sailor, from the skipper to the cabin-boy, is exempt from them. A sick man may be fined for going to hospital, fined on coming out again, fined for complaining of putrid food, fined if summoned before a judge who cannot understand a word he says, fined for being sent to prison unjustly, fined for coming out again, put in irons without a hearing upon a charge quite unintelligible, fined when discharged from his employment, fined when shipped again.

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* Foreign Office List, page 9.

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It is no child's play to deal with these permanent officials. The private happiness and public career of thousands may depend, humanly speaking, on their decisions upon subjects of which they know nothing, and will consent to learn nothing. They will not endure in the Foreign Office any man who has ever exercised, even under their own patronage, one of these consular judgeships, and they contemptuously toss aside all practical suggestions for their improvement. There is nothing to prevent them from calmly reviving in the Foreign Office the ancient procedure of the Star Chamber, unknown to the common law of England since the time of Charles the First. They can institute secret inquiries upon secret information and gossip letters of the agents' customers seeking promotion. They may order domiciliary visits without warrant or authority; they may cause papers, public and private, to be seized at a moment's notice; they have been known to discharge officers holding distant posts from their employment, by telegram, without an hour's warning or a word of explanation. The unexplained suppression of the Abyssinian letter shows that they may possibly be able to intercept the Queen's letters.

Such is the Foreign Office of Great Britain in the year 1867-8. We are governed by an old worn-out absurd system which, for want of a better name, may be called "King Rusty." He is a pitiful king, without experience or magnanimity; taking pleasure in the pain and humiliation of others for wanton tyranny's sake, and most haughty as to his deportment; stolid, also, to a degree beyond human credibility. Abolition, suppression, and entire annihilation represent the only possible cure for such a king; forbearance, patience, hope of amendment, being all exhausted to the last squeeze with him.

King Rusty has his courtiers who koo-too before him, and do his bad bidding. They are noxious sort of midges, who buzz about clubs and dinner-tables, fetching and carrying, and staining where they settle. They maintain petty rancours for years and years, sting and bite at them constantly till they fester. They have cunning traditions to confound the simple. Abuses which are commonly supposed to have died out in England long ago crop up again rankly in King Rusty. Let us take an instance:

It is their fashionable defence to say that they must not be censured in parliament or their conduct questioned, because they are not present to defend themselves. But surely this argument is not true of the press. Any man can defend himself there. Why do not they give an intelligible account of their public career in writing, in answer to the statements of the Morning Post, the Pall Mall Gazette, and The Examiner. The newspapers would be glad to have it, the public would be glad to read it, and they might state their own case under the advice and with the assistance of the law officers of the crown to keep them from tripping. It is probable that nothing can be a greater comfort to them than *not* to be in parliament; for they would soon get turned inside out, mentally or morally, if they were. But this excuse is worn threadbare, and any of them who is able to speak up for himself and his friends must now do so, or let judgment go by default. The country will not be any longer cajoled by such shallow artifices as heretofore into attaching blame to the wrong persons. It will not allow King Rusty to shelve his victims, nor to send them to Coventry far from human speech and counsel. The whole story must come fairly out now. Public attention is roused never to sleep again till we know who are our masters and who are not. It is a stale trick to tell us again the old stupid story about the sin of personalities. Personality, when justly and properly directed, is the only possible remedy for such complaints as ours. Our wounds have grown rank and foul; nothing but actual cautery will cleanse them. "Poor dear man!" society is wont to say of King Rusty in its wishy-washy jargon, "Poor dear man! you know he is beneath argument. He is not worth so much honest indignation. Besides" (this is always thought a clincher), "he is really no worse than hosts of others."

Now, when Society has said this, and added that it will not countenance attacks on individuals, it goes off to dinner, satisfied that it has settled the whole question, while, in fact, it has hitherto and effectually silenced all useful inquiry in any direction whatever. The truth is, attacks against some abstract system convey no meaning to the Public mind whatever; and a system, however faulty, has always some stupid or wicked man, or some man who is both stupid and wicked, at the bottom of it. What would be the use of a barrister thundering against theft, if the burglar who had robbed his client was suffered to listen to his pleadings, an amused and unconcerned spectator of his own trial? The outcry against personalities is merely part of the cunning, which sets detection and punishment at defiance. If we wish to do any good by this movement, we must have out the real culprits, and compel them to tell us all about themselves and their doings before we condone the past. We should know what we have to forgive before we pardon them, and should use their confessions to protect us against similar misdoings for the future. Society—that is to say, the uncles and nephews and aunts and nieces of the permanent clerks—will not like it. But there are times when Secret Societies of this kind must be taught their duty. They are at all times narrow creatures, and they never respond to the honest throbs of the great national heart which lies so much deeper than their petty coteries and limited minds can fancy. Even now they are mustering in their meeting-houses to talk down the inquiries which are being made about them. They insolently and even gaily defy the country to convict them. And unless the whole question is taken up in an earnest, truthful, resolute spirit by some member of parliament who will fight it out in spite

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of all opposition and by-play to the end, everything will be worse than ever, as it was fifteen years ago, when the "system" was last fully exposed in Household Words.* King Rusty is too dogged and sullen to take a hint and be quiet. He will understand nothing but deposition. He will never abdicate; he must be dethroned. What we desire to know is no impossible or unreasonable thing. It is merely this: Who are the people who rule us? what are their powers and attributes? Are they the midges in office, or the responsible advisers of the Crown? and how far does their authority agree with the principles of our Constitution and our Laws?

* See Her Majesty's Service, vol. viii., pages 433 and 523; and Her Majesty's Consular Service, vol. ix. page 482.

WORDBOROUGH MINT.

The English, said Voltaire, gain two hours a day in talking, because they eat half their words. We are not greater gluttons than our neighbours in that sort of diet, but we do save time. We save it, not because we swallow syllables and syllabubs with equal relish, but by paring and pruning. We are not omni-vorous when we cut away the first two syllables of omnibus, and save time by the use of a word in three letters instead of seven. Gentlemen and ladies of a precise classical turn still consume time by saying omnibus; and an over-classical member of parliament will go down to posterity as the gentleman who talked about "two omnibi," forgetting that if he will stickle for his Eton Latin grammar he must take omnibus for what it is already, a plural form of the word omnis—all; meaning "for all," and so indicating the desire of its inventors to provide a vehicle in which people of all ranks might agree to sit together, and solve one of the problems set them by the growth of London. And so they do. Since the Canterbury Pilgrims, never did groups of people so diverse in rank make the same journey together upon equal terms, till busses came to be an institution. Chaucer gone, the world waited for Shillibeer. In the eye of the conductor, my lord, his lackey, my lady, and her milliner's apprentice, are alike from the moment they become his fares. Within the omnibus a philosophical republic is established, with the conductor for its president. Is it a sense of this dignity in his position, as one who cares no more than Charon to distinguish among fares, and who would not set a higher value than threepence, between Camden-town and Tottenham-court-road, upon Aristotle or Alexander the Great—is it our sense of this philosophic dignity that has saved the conductor from all clipping of his title? If omnibus be bus, why not call the conductor duck? Hailing the duck to get a buss might sound like a forward proceeding. But what of that? The whole desire is to get forward—to be a little fast. Talking of duck suggests that there is, after all, one open joint in the conductor's philosophic armour, and that near his heart. He cares less for men than for women. But here, again, he has a sublime disdain for mere surface particulars. "Sylvia the fair in the bloom of fifteen," or any "wrinkled hag with age grown double," would equally impel him to ask Pompey the Great himself to "ride outside to oblige a lady." Whatever the reason, this impassive man has a title that might be given to Death itself, The Conductor, and no mortal has ventured to contract it. Not even into the dissyllable, ducky. Yet when we chop three joints from the word cabriolet, and call that vehicle a cab, we call the driver thereof cabby. This way of economising speech was discussed by Addison in one of his papers for the Spectator, where, in the character of a silent gentleman, he rejoiced in the objection of his countrymen to waste of words. When we are obliged to utter our thoughts, we do it, he said, in the shortest way we are able; our language abounds in monosyllables which enable us to express thought in few sounds; where the words are not monosyllables, we often make them so, as much as lies in our power, by rapidity of pronunciation. We have left off sounding ed as a syllable in words like lovëd, except at church, where saving of time is not an object. We say can't and won't for cannot and will not, and save breath even at the expense of whoms and whiches. The abbreviation of mobile or mobility, as the name of the fickle populace, into mob was commented on by Swift as well as Addison. Dryden wrote "mobile." Says the Mufti in Don Sebastian, "'Tis a laudable commotion. The voice of the Mobile is the voice of Heaven." But mob is now lawful and accepted currency as a complete English word; and so is cab; and so is bus becoming. When the Times newspaper was established in January, seventeen 'eighty-five, the name given to it by its godfather was "The Daily Universal Register;" but this name being long, and allowing great latitude to the taste of the trade and of the public, was broken up into so many odd little bits, that on the first of January, seventeen 'eighty-eight, it appeared under the new name of "The Times," which, its proprietor announced, "being a monosyllable, bids defiance to corruptors and mutilators of the language."

The omnibus we have got upon is evidently taking us through Wordborough, down the old Etymology Road, in the direction of the Mint and the Exchange. So be it. There is no reason why we should not pay a visit to the Mint, see a few words coined, and take a turn on 'Change, where we may observe how the coin is trafficked with.

Everybody knows that — except phrases adopted by successive generations from popular plays and songs, and retained, when their origin has become unknown to those who continue in the use of them—a great part of the familiar speech of the untaught is coin of the most ancient stamp. Thus "going the whole hog" —"the whole hog or none"—which bears the

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sense of doing anything with all one's powers; all at one stroke; is called an Americanism, and supposed to be a play of fancy in some incomprehensible direction. But it went forth from Scrooby with the Pilgrim Fathers, although how we came by it had passed out of memory, till Mr. Sabine Baring-Gould, three or four years ago, found its original form among the Icelanders, descended from those Norsemen who of old made many settlements among us. This hog has no more to do with bacon, than the old sign of the Virgin's Greeting, the "Pige was hael," has to do with its new form of the Pig and Whistle. It is the pure Scandinavian "högg" in the form "med höggi," which means "all at once." In Iceland, Mr. Baring-Gould found that we owed to the Scandinavians the words brag, from bragth, rumour, renown; chap, from kappi, a fighting-man; fellow, from felag, a comrade, literally one who goes shares in money; duffer (a stupid fellow), from dofi, laziness; and ninny-hammer, from the negative *n* prefixed to the old Norse word ein-hammer, meaning one in his right senses—nein-hammer being, therefore, one who is not in his right senses. The Yorkshire Ridings (a corruption of Thriddings, that is, Thirdings) correspond to the divisions in South Norway, and our sailors take many a word from the old Norsemen and Danes, who made themselves a part of us, and helped centuries ago to strengthen us as a nation of seafarers. Nelson is Danish Nielson, and our Nelson was born at the old Danish Burnhamthorpe. The British fleet is named from the Scandinavian flaade; shipboard, from skibsborde; steersman, from styrmand; wreck, from vrag. An earl was called by our Anglo-Saxon forefathers an alderman, earl by the Danes, who would have spoken as we do of an earl in his yacht;—a jarl in his jagt, they would have said. Wherever we find many names of places ending, in the Danish way, with -by and -thorpe, these Northmen once abounded. Observe the ending of the name of Scrooby; the Norse högg was naturalised in those parts. And as there are hogs that are not hogs, so there are old men that are not men. The old native Celtic for a high rock, alt maen, comes down to us as the Old Man of Coniston, the Old Man of Hoy, in the Orkneys, a conspicuous rock pyramid, fifteen hundred feet high. This confusion of the old traditional word with the nearest sense that could be made of it, in later English is a common process. The sailor turns his good ship the Bellerophon into the Billy Ruffian; the girasole has become the Jerusalem artichoke; the buffetier, a beefeater; dormeuse, a dormouse; as the groom who had charge of the two horses, Othello and Desdemona, called them Old Fellow and Thursday Morning. Tradition tells how Guy of Warwick gained a mighty victory over a Dun Cow. It was the Dena Gau, or Danish settlement, near Warwick. Our town of Leighton Beau-désert has become Leighton-Buzzard; and the brass eagle in the lectern of the parish church has been shown to strangers by a learned verger as the original buzzard from which the town derived its name. Philip the Second of Spain, who had been married to Queen Mary of England, recollected in Elizabeth's reign the names of the English palaces; and on the side of a despatch from his ambassador in London, telling him that Queen Elizabeth was at the Palace of St. James's, he thus scrawled his recollection of Whitehall: "There is a park between it and the palace, which is called Huytal; but why it is called Huytal I am sure I don't know." Perhaps that is not more of a puzzle than the version of the name for an Englishman at Fort Vancouver. He is called a Kintshosh—that is to say, a "King George." The Indians in that neighbourhood call an American a "Boston," and have adopted, for best manners as a form of salutation, the remarkable word, "Clakhohahyah." The originators of that phrase had observed that a distinguished trader named Clark was always approached by his countrymen with the exclamation, "Clark, how are you?" As for that town which gives its name to the American in these parts, it is another illustration of the saying of Horne Tooke concerning words, that "letters, like soldiers, are very apt to desert and drop off in a long march." Boston is short for Botolph's ton, which is short for Saint Bartholomew's Town. There is a place named from a person. The same thing is done when a person is named from a place; when, for example, Sevenoaks is cut down into Snooks.

The part of London where bullion was sheared or cut into shape before stamping —Shere-monier's Lane—became first Sheremonger's Lane, and eventually Sermon Lane, because it was near Paternoster Row and Amen Corner. So the part of London given to the artisans who came to England after the loss of Calais and its dependencies, was called Hames et Guines, which, as it was near Tower Hill, and a place of execution, came to be called Hangman's Gains. The Hay Market stood originally in Fenchurch-street. There never could have been a "Fen" on such high ground; and this thoroughfare owes its name to the French word for Hay, "Foin." A sort of English is made by the gardener, who calls one kind of cherry the May Duke. It is the Médoc, a cherry brought to us from Médoc, in the Gironde. Cherry itself is named from a town on the Black Sea. The name of the peach comes to us through several languages from the word that names its origin as a Persian fruit; and nectarine is Persian for the Best, as the Best form of peach. So some derive the bergamot from Turkish Beg or Bey Armoud, the Prince of Pears. Chestnuts are named from Castanea, in Thessaly; filberts—avellana nuts—are nuts of Abella, a town in Campania; avel-nut, vel-nut, fil-nut, fil-but, filbert. The shallot—ascalonia—is from Ascalon; spinach is Hispanicum, or, in Arabic, Hispanach, the Spanish plant, as spaniel is Spanish dog, the Spanish themselves having once also been called Spaniels by the English. Chocolate and cocoa are named from the Mexican province of Choco; but the name of

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the cocoa-nut is said to be derived from the Portuguese word coco, a mask, because the shell, with the three holes at one end of it, is like a mask.

Sarcenet was the silk fabric got from the Saracens; gauze was made at Gaza; fustian in Fustat, which is the Arabic name of Memphis, in Egypt, where cotton abounds; dimity, at Damietta. Carpet is probably named from Cairo and tapet, Cairo having been a famous place of manufacture of Turkey carpets, and carpets with hair or shag on one side only having been called by the ancients tapetes. Taffety and tabby were Atabi, the fabrics of Atab, the street of the silk-workers in Bagdad. Moire and mohair were fabrics of the Moors, in Spain. The Morris Dance, by the way, which is the fandango said to have been brought by John of Gaunt from Spain, was so called in the belief that it was taken to Spain by the Moors. But to dance back to the dancing of the shuttle, after the Arabs, there rose into fame as leading manufacturers the Flemings, who made cambric at Cambrai; diaper, or cloth d'Ypres, at Ypres; tapestry at Arras, and gloves at Ghent, whence the French gant and English gauntlet. From a settlement of cloth-workers upon the river Toucques, in Normandy, the Germans are said to have got their word tuch for a cloth, and we our duck, our ticking, and best bib and tucker. But bib is from the Latin bibere, to drink, the woven tucker being used to save the child's clothes from whatever may be spilt when it is bibbing. As we happen to be mixing food and clothes together in our heads, let it be remembered here that the dress called a Spencer, and the victual called a Sandwich, are named after the two noble earls, their inventors, of whom it is said that

The one invented half a coat,
The other half a dinner.

Blankets are, like mackintoshes, named from their first makers. These were three brothers of Bristol, Edward, Edmund, and Thomas Blanket, who in the fourteenth century established a large trade in this fabric. They made coarse woollen cloths, and it is Thomas, the youngest, who is supposed to have bit on the idea of weaving the thick stuff, which sportsmen at once took to for protection against wet or cold weather. Edward the First found the new fabric of the Blankets valuable to his army when it was encamped against the Welsh or Scots. Before the Blankets made at a cheap rate this thick and comfortable woollen clothing, the English peasantry could afford only coarse garments of hemp. When in the reign of Edward the Third stump bedsteads came into fashion, and men ceased to sleep on rushes, straw, or fern laid on the floor, blankets became a necessary part of the bed-furniture, and they are duly and repeatedly accounted for in the "Expenses of the Great Wardrobe" of King Edward the Third. In a later time cravats, which came into use in sixteen 'thirty-six, were named from the Croats, called in French Cravates, who had a peculiar scarf tied about their necks. A fabric of silk and mohair, called in French gros-grain, meaning coarse of texture, was Englished in grogram. Admiral Vernon was so often seen by his men in a grogram cloak, that they spoke of him as Old Grog; and when he introduced on board ship the use of rum-and-water as a regulation drink, they called it grog. That by-the-by. Scotch tartan is a word recalling the old friendship between Scots and French. Tiretaine was a fine woollen cloth much used for robes, and generally of a scarlet colour. More than five hundred years ago Jean de Meung, in the Romance of the Rose, spoke of robes of silk and wool "de scarlate de tiretaine," which indicates that the word had been tire-teint, Tyretint, and meant scarlet of the Tyrian colour, which is purple; the old use of the word scarlet extending to all tints of blue and red, from indigo to crimson. As to Nature's own fine weaving in the webs of gossamer, for which the Germans have also a name of Marythreads, and which is variously associated with suggestions of the Virgin, the prettiest of half a dozen ways of accounting for the name is that which tells us gossamer is Gauze o' Mary.

Less ethereal is Sally Lunn, to whom ten thousand of little monuments are daily renewed in our bakehouses, and set up by our hearths. The illustrious author of this tea-cake lived at the close of the last century. Her home was in Bath, where she cried her bun-cakes morning and evening about the streets, carrying them in a basket with a white cloth over it. A musical baker, named Dalmer, wrote and set to music a song in her praise, and bought her trade. The song was an advertisement. In many barrows he sent Sally Lunns morning and evening about the streets, and succeeded so well that he could retire from business to eat his cake in peace at his own home as a private gentleman. It is not told us that Dalmer married Sally Lunn, and that they lived happy together upon tea-cakes ever after.

"A cockney, simper-de-cockit, nice thing," is part of an old French dictionary-maker's English for coquine, and it is probable that a too close relation to the cakes and pasties of the coquina, or kitchen, gave to the effeminate man of the capital his name of cockney. It is allied to the old fable of what Hobbes, the philosopher, called "the land of Cockany, where fowls ready roasted cry, 'Come and eat me!' for, among the delicacies of this happy country, ready roasted geese fly into the house exclaiming, 'All hot! all hot!'" But our old English poet took that popular kitchen myth of France and other lands for special use in satire on the luxury of cloistered men. Their house in the land of Cockayne was an abbey:

The gees irostid on the spitte
Fleey to that abbai, God hit wot,
And gredith: "Gees al hote, al hot!"

Some Greek scholar has found another reason why a Londoner should be called a cockney.

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He is one born among houses, in Greek, "oi)*kogenē*(s."

Erudition has also suggested Greek as the origin of the American word whimsically used for flight from battle in the recent civil war. It tells us that the word probably was formed by some professor at Harvard University out of the Greek word skedao, to disperse; and will have it that, where this verb is used in the Odyssey, Minerva having said her say to Ulysses, "skedaddled through the sky." We also find in the Iliad an instance of skedaddling from a fight. On the other hand, skedaddle is said to be an old homely word of our own northern dialect. A milkmaid in Dumfries, who spills milk, is said to be skedaddling it. And, in fact, we need not go for an origin to the Greek skedao, when we have our own old word sceadan (which is in Gothic skeidan, and the modern German scheiden), meaning to divide and separate. The real origin, however, of the old Saxon provincialism is not even here, but we shall take upon ourselves to find it partly in the Anglo-Saxon sceót (pronounced skeót), rapid motion. Sceotan is to move vehemently, to shoot forward; that being, indeed, the first sense of our word shoot. A Dumfries girl who skedaddles her milk does so by over rapid motion. Now, in the same old form of our language that makes sceot rapid motion, adle means disease, and sceot-adle—i.e. skedaddle—would be a perfectly good compound to represent the notion of a sort of bolting fever, a bad habit of scudding away when one ought not.

Happily, nobody derives Buncombe from the Greek. It is a county with an area of four hundred and fifty square miles in the western part of North Carolina. Some years ago the member for that county rose in Congress and talked nonsense for a considerable time. Member after member left the hall, and the orator told those who remained that they might as well go too; he should speak for some time yet, "but he was only talking for Buncombe." Hence, in America, the name of Buncombe as a byword for the wasting of time with talk made for show, and not for use. Who would deny that the word Platform, expressive of a political stand-point, is a modern Americanism? But it is older than the age of Queen Elizabeth. In the comedy of "Grim, the Collier of Croydon," a plotter exclaims:

> A sudden Platform comes into my mind.

Tarleton produced a piece called "The Platform of the Seven Deadly Sins." The play of Sir J. Oldcastle, by Drayton (1600), contains a passage giving the word the precise signification it bears at this day:

> There is the Platform, and their bands, my lord,
> Each severally subscribed to the same.

The whining, singing speech about religion, said to be called cant from two Puritan ministers, father and son, with the same name of Andrew Cant, who lived in the reign of Charles the Second, is more probably derived, like chant, from cant, the root of the Latin word that means to sing.

Fudge, which first took its place among good English words in Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, was not a word of Goldsmith's coining. In a pamphlet of Remarks on the Navy, 1700, the word is traced to the name of a commander of a merchantman who lived in the writer's time. Captain Fudge, he says, "upon a return from a voyage, however ill fraught soever his ship was, always brought home his owners a good stock of lies, so much so that now aboard ship the sailors, when they hear a great lie told, cry out, 'You Fudge it!'" We are sorry to dispossess the captain, and to differ even from so good an authority as Mr. Hensleigh Wedgwood, who sees only in Fudge a provincial French exclamation, Feuche, which answers to our Pish. Fudge is, in fact, an ancient native word, good Celtic for a lie. At this day, the Welsh for a disguise or lie is Ffug, and the verb, Ffugio, stands in the dictionary as meaning "to delude, to feign, to dissemble, to deceive, to deal hypocritically;" in short, to Fudge, while Ffug-sanct—Fudge-saint—is the essential part of the Welsh word for a hypocrite.

Indeed, there has been more and closer union between Celts and Anglo-Saxons in this country than until of late some people have believed, and there is more trace of it in our language than any one imagined twenty years ago. We have accounted ourselves something apart from the O's and the Macs. Disdainful of the undistinguished Celt, Pinkerton said, "Show me a great O, and I am done." The Irish O, or Oy, is said to have meant grandson, and so meant the old lady who is reported to have said, "Oi have lived long enough to have a hundred Oyes." The Welsh Ap, meaning son, prefixed to Evan, becomes Bevan; Ap Henry becomes Perry and Parry; Ap Howel, Powell; Ap Hugh, Pugh; Ap Richard, Pritchard; Ap Rhys, Price; Ap Roderick, Broderick and Brodie; and there are plenty of them blended past all disentanglement with those who talk of themselves as purely Anglo-Saxon. Happy it is for us, and good for our wits, that we are so blended; it may calm the temper of some controversies when we have more general and thorough knowledge of the fact that a man of pure and single race does not exist in England, and probably not one among the educated classes without Celtic blood in him.

Talking of education, how is it that generations of the untaught send their descendants down to us with names that to the polite eye and ear often appear as vulgar as themselves? Certain names we condemn at once as plebeian. Very often they are stately names that have been damaged by the spelling of untaught possessors of them. Thus Taillefer reappears as Tulliver, De Champ as Shands, Theobald as Tipple, and Bellechère as Belcher, though that last name, by the way, suggests the image of a scholar and a gentleman. Of the same family of Molineux, the educated line retains the

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spelling of its name; the uneducated sinks into Mulnicks and Mullins. But Mullins may be also a version of Desmoulins. The Tupignys may keep their name, if they stick to their books and fight through generations for the accuracy of its spelling. If they don't, their fate is to become Twopennies. A parish register in Suffolk shows the origin of the Griggs's. They were Greygeese — from Greygoose, to Griggus, to Griggs, through many generations; but the uneducated do not trouble to go back to their remote beginnings, and could not always if they would. There is an old word for "beginning" —ord—which occurred in the phrase for beginning and end, "ord and end." That has become "odds and ends," which is exactly what this paper has become. And so 'tis the reverse of odd that it ends here.

THE DEAR GIRL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," &c.

CHAPTER XXX. MARGARET ON THE WATCH.

VIVIAN went straight to West's house on the Place. He sent up word to beg that he might speak with him on private business. The worn and wasted figure came down with fiery and feverish eyes. "What do you want with me?" he said, in a hoarse voice. Vivian thought of Marguerite, and said, "Would you come with me down to the Port, or anywhere you please, so that I may say what I have to say in private?"

"What can you have to do with me?" said West. "I do not wish to meet you. It were better for both of us."

"Perhaps," said Vivian, with eyes flashing. "But that will scarcely do with me. Let us speak calmly. I do not wish to attract attention."

"What!" said West, eagerly. "You wish me to——You are aggrieved. Is it *that*?"

"Not at all," said the other, placidly; "you shall hear, if you come."

West looked at him a little wildly, went up for his hat, and then they went out together.

When they got to the end of the Port, and had walked without speaking, Vivian turned round suddenly and stood in front of him:

"I come to warn you about the tactics you have hitherto pursued. They are surely unworthy of a gentleman—of a man, to pursue an innocent weak girl with such vindictive weapons as calumny and slander. You have failed hitherto, and you have done little mischief, though your plot was well laid—thank Heaven we have had the means of frustrating it, and it shall recoil upon your own head."

"Who has sent you with this story?" said West, passionately. "Is this more of her defiance of me, or does she wish to drive me mad faster than I am becoming mad already?"

"I have no wish to argue the thing with you. But you must promise."

"I shall receive no such messages from you or any one. What do you mean? What has that cruel girl sent you to harass me about?"

"You know well," said the other, "those base wicked stories you have sent abroad about that little harmless day's pleasure we had, when you knew her father was with us——"

"Oh! this is the scandal I have set about—that *she* says I have sent about. So! She does not believe it, in her heart. *You* have set her on that; tell me that."

"Then I should tell you what is not true. She has long been convinced that, whatever regard you once had for her, has been changed into a morbid hatred that will spare nothing to satisfy itself. She has seen too many proofs of this to doubt it; and the only excuse she can make for you is, that it may be some weakness or morbid delusion. But, whatever *has* happened, I have now come to tell you that this *must* be all changed for the future. I am to be her protector henceforth. A day for our marriage has been fixed."

West, to whom all this speech was a series of stabs, stood listening quite stupified.

"Fixed," went on the other, "beyond recal. She is to be mine, mine for ever, at all risks! I brave everything for her; and from this moment I stand between her and any breath of annoyance or persecution! So it is my duty to warn you. As for myself, I shall learn to defy spies of all degrees. Your sister has dared to threaten me. Let her do her worst. For Lucy I have run all risks, and I will go through it to the very end. My game may be as desperate as yours, so take care."

Though he spoke in this defiant way, he all but felt pity for his wretched companion, who, as he looked back, he saw leaning hopelessly against a pillar.

Every one, indeed, remarked the alteration in Margaret—the contracted brow, the eager eyes, the intense look. The people of the place could not understand the affection for her brother which was this woman's whole soul, life, and heart. Indeed, those who saw her with him often took an opposite impression, and argued from her dry snappish speeches that they did not "get on well." The captain had his eye on her, and said she was "as knowing as an owl, sir"—"deep as an old badger"—"crafty as a cellar cat," with other compliments. "*She'd* lock up the salt, and measure out the gravy; and if you plucked her skirt, wouldn't she turn and claw you! I'd like, sir," he said to one of his friends, "to see her and the Dear Girl in a cupboard together. How she'd rake her and rasp her! I declare, at church last Sunday, when I was listening to the blessed words of life from Penny's holy jaws, I saw her eyes boring through the girl like fiery bodkins. Mark my words, if she doesn't score it up in good time."

The captain, a judge of human nature, had, indeed, hit the truth of that Sunday. When Mr. Penny was ministering, and our Lucy

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praying earnestly and fervently for her dear heart, that little troubles might pass away, and that they might live for ever and ever happily here and hereafter, she had felt those wicked eyes fixed upon her, and was sorely troubled. She felt they were those of an enemy, and she could pray no more. Margaret only lived for that one purpose—to watch—watch always, and frustrate. She had her prayers also. Watch she did—here, there, and everything; that strange power, which settled purpose gives, furnishing her with opportunities, and giving her occasions. Was it for this reason that she began to take such an interest in Mrs. Jaques and her welfare? And the pretty landlady, who admired *all* the English, of every degree and nature, was pleased with this notice, and used to return Miss West's visits as she passed through the Place on some commission, or as she came from the post. She knew well, indeed, as every woman there with opportunity must have known, the state of "ce pauvre Vaist" and his treatment. She had that pity which is allied to contempt; and she admired her tenant the more for his victory over a rival. The whole was a little drama.

She had her own troubles. The enterprise in which they had embarked their little capital was rather too large and burdensome even for that never-ceasing labour of her own and Jaques's. Sawing up little logs on X-shaped stands returned small profits, even if continued from the rising to the setting of the sun. And now there was some joyful news—an approaching event which made our little madame proud, but which was certain to add to their other responsibilities. Alas! too, the landlord had served notice—he must raise their rent! Houses were growing more valuable every hour. These little trials, and much more, she would rehearse piteously to Margaret, whose look assumed sympathy as well as it could. "And now," added little Madam Jaques, standing in the drawing-room—"now, Mademoiselle Vaist, now, when I tell this news to Jaques, which I thought would have ravished him, he looks down gloomily and pensive. Mon Dieu, what will become of us!"

This did not affect Margaret much: her mind travelled away to a greater purpose. Madame Jaques was an incurable, but a pretty and engaging, little gossip. Margaret had only to touch a spring, and she was telling fluently of the splendid creature, Vivian. He was so depressed, so low in his mind: madame quite felt for him. There he sits, with his eyes on the ground in a reverie. And "O mon Dieu! the letters, so many, so large—that size," she added, holding her hands apart. "And I declare I quite dread them, mademoiselle."

"Why, why?" said Margaret, eagerly.

"He is so depressed, mademoiselle, after they arrive: especially, do you know," added little madame, looking round with an air of cozy mystery, "especially after the Paris mail comes in. Now you know, Mademoiselle Vaist, if it was after news from his *own* country, we could understand it would be in the order of nature. But from Paris it is so curious, si intéressant," added the little madame, laughing.

The keen eyes of Margaret were upon her. She was at her desk continuing an interrupted letter. "What do you mean?" she said, coldly.

"Oh, I suspect, do you know," she went on with a little pride. "We *all* suspect. He is so handsome, so graceful, so charming—few girls, indeed—and I dare say up in Paris yonder, where he would, of course, be fêted and admired—what more natural—some charming girl has given him her whole heart."

"Whom he has deceived and abandoned!" said Margaret, fiercely. "Nothing more likely!"

"No, no, I assure you, no, mademoiselle," said madame, covertly. "They would follow *him*. He cannot help it, he is so handsome, so graceful."

So she went on. Margaret was not listening: her pen still in her hand, she was following out some thought eagerly; her eyes were travelling away. Suddenly she interrupted the little lady's admiring raptures.

"You are going to the post now. Will you take this letter, and ask if there are any for us? We have no reason to long for the post; but no matter. Indeed, if you could call as often as you can, and bring us whatever letters came." Madame was delighted.

In a quarter of an hour she was back again, triumphant and out of breath. She was holding up the mail.

"What did I tell you, mademoiselle? Was I not right? O mon Dieu! They come in thousands, all like this, large as a placard; and," added she, dropping her voice, "this is the Paris mail—just what I said. Oh, he gets letters of this pattern very, *very* often."

She held up one in an official shape of cover, on blue tissue paper, and directed in blue ink, with a little printed label in the corner. Margaret's eyes settled on it abruptly; then she suddenly snatched it from her. Madame was a little startled. Margaret scrutinised it carefully and eagerly, and then gave it back to her.

"It is some tradesman's circular," she said. "There—that will do. I have to finish my letter—don't you see? Quick."

After that madame noticed a restlessness in Margaret, and eagerness for her to begone. She described her to Jaques, the "bon homme," as brusque and rough. She did not like her.

"When I told her, Jaques, how happy the bon Dieu was about to make you soon, she did not embrace me as that sweet child opposite did. You might have thought I had told her I was going for a walk."

But when our little madame was outside the door, Margaret rushed from her chair, flew for her bonnet, and went out. With her lips she was repeating to herself the words on the label—"Maison Favre! Maison Favre! Who will tell me—who knows it?" she thought. "Paris is such a world; and in a school like *that* there are so many! I hold him now; I

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have him *now*," she thought. "Another schoolgirl—a fine pursuit for a man of his kind! I should have been justified in tearing it open and reading it. He has done us more injury than *that*."

As she posted along, she met Doctor Macan, the deposed physician, grown very decayed. The other doctor had made tremendous way. Indeed, "poor Mac" had become a serious bore, and every one fought shy of him, if they could. As Captain Filby said, "in the man's hungry grin you could see, 'Lend me a five-franc piece.'" Margaret was about passing him, but she stopped suddenly.

"Can you tell me, Doctor Macan," she said, hurriedly, "anything about the schools of Paris, or any one who is likely to know?"

"Not I," said he, sourly. "*She* has sided with White Why do you ask *me*, ma'am? I am good for little now, it seems. Any whipper-snapper can supplant me. Apply to the other shop, ma'am."

"No, indeed, Doctor Macan. I was just going to send for you. My poor brother is in a very poor way. Do come in the morning."

The doctor looked pleased. "I will, ma'am, the first thing. You may depend on me. You were asking——I'll tell you who knows all about that, and has all the almanacks, and registers, and lists — every school in the kingdom, ma'am. The maire, ma'am—as good as the mayor of Cork, any day. *I'll* make it out for you, if you give it to me on a slip of paper. Very well. 'Maison Favre.' So be it. All right. I'll bring it up, never fear, to-morrow."

That night, as Miss West was sitting dismally with her brother, Doctor Macan's servant came with a note. It ran:

"Maison Favre isn't a school at all. At the corner I met my brother, of the French faculty, and, by very good luck, thought of asking him. Favre's, a Maison de Santé. Favre is well known in the profession. 'Favre sur la Cervelle,' they say, is a great book. I never heard of it. But don't trust these French. I could tell you a much better house near Cork."

CHAPTER XXXI. A RESOLVE.

Margaret's stern warning was no vain threat. Vivian had a horrid instinct, that she was watching his every turn as he and Lucy passed by through the crowd, in the gay Prado. The indignant heart of our little Lucy swelled, as she thought of this base treatment. "He does indeed hate me; but I could not have believed that he would have stooped so low and to such means. Even when Vivian was hurrying along by himself, making for the Post, whither he now often anxiously repaired, he was sure to encounter Margaret's eye fixed on him boldly and steadily, and with the same triumphant proclamation, "I hold you in my power. I am watching, and can give you full line; but at any moment——"

On one day the Messageries Royales was late. There were no tidings of the malle poste at Sody's, and, as of course, the eagerness of the English became frantic. The whole community repaired a dozen times to Sody's. The Post-office was besieged. Every one at last grew into the delusion that something was denied to them, and that he was most cruelly treated. The only genuine expectant who was waiting the Paris post was Vivian.

The eye of his enemy had been on him as he came and went. But now the whole day had run by, and, in real anxiety, towards eight o'clock he prepared to go up once more to Sody's. Lucy had sympathised with him. "This," he said to her, "concerns you too; and who can tell? perhaps this long-expected despatch may set us free from our troubles."

It was quite dark; as he went out, the lamps were being swung up on their strings. The streets were quite deserted. He walked up to Sody's, and by the gathering and bustle saw, even from afar off, that the long-expected malle poste had come in. Torches were blazing, lanterns flitting; for the diligence, a little overdue, was also in sight. Vivian had turned away homeward, and was thinking of a little solitary turn down by the Pier, always attractive to him, as it was to every man there with trouble on his mind. It was a dull evening, and only a few stragglers, who had been shut up all day in the little dens, and could not get on without their walk, came forth wrapped close in mackintoshes.

Mr. West was among those stragglers who hung round the port and saw the daily steamer come in—a gloomy arrival, a few lamps, for it was dark, and a few shadowy figures coming ashore. In this oft-repeated event, when there was not crowd, he had come to find a dismal pleasure and occupation. He absently watched the half-dozen passengers who came ashore in a scant procession. But there was one—a bright, quick, black-whiskered face, which he thought he knew, and whose voice, speaking good French to the porters, seemed familiar. He waited till he passed under the lamp, and then remembered it was that doctor he had met as he went to Sir John Trotter's. He would have gone up to him and spoken, but he was not in heart, and had much the feeling towards him which people often have to casual acquaintances met at a watering-place — when our play is over, the lights down, and we have no wish to see the actors off their own boards. He was restrained, too, by seeing that the traveller was joined and greeted heartily by a figure whom he presently, to his surprise, found to be Vivian. They walked away together, and he heard the doctor order his luggage to be taken to the diligence-office.

There was nothing surprising in this, but it came back on him suddenly, that, in talking over Dieppe, which the doctor had said he knew better than England, he had never affected to know Colonel Vivian, though Mr. West mentioned his name, and his going away to Paris. West's restless mind, in a very unhealthy state,

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now settled on this, and he felt a strange curiosity to know the reason of this secresy.

Suddenly a figure in a cloak passed them hurriedly, stopped, came back a little, and looked hard into his face. They were close beside an old open porte cochère, over which hung a dim lamp.

"I was just hurrying to your house," she heard the stranger say. "I was in Paris yesterday. She was asking to see you, and I have come at once."

Margaret did not wait to hear more; she darted away in a moment. Even as she did so, Vivian had seen the figure, turned round uneasily, and even with a misgiving.

West came home pacing about the room in his usual dismal beat, and with the gentle Constance sitting near. She had long since discovered how hopeless were the common-places of comfort in his case; and that much more soothing would be a mere gentle remark of sympathy. The news of *that* day had wrought on him miserably, and he was only now recovering from the blow, declaiming almost frantically.

"How can I stand it?—how can it please me to see her married to him? I should fly from this place. And yet, if I did, I could only return again. She could not do it—she dare not do it!"

At this moment entered Margaret. She carried one of the little old French argand lamps in her hand, and it lit up her hard face. There was a smile of triumph on it.

"Don't let that disturb you, Gilbert," she said. "Let him promise and swear to her as much as he please. I have discovered something. If you would come with me to Paris to-night——"

"To-night!" He started. "Why?"

"Because *he* is going."

"*He* going, leaving her! I knew he would do it. Thank Heaven, I shall be avenged!"

"Perhaps so. If we are fortunate, he may never return!"

West looked at her, wondering and excited. Then his face fell.

"I should not have the heart to do it. I could not sit in a carriage for that long journey. My heart would flutter itself away in impatience. I should be in agonies. This is fancy, I know; but I dare not face it. No, no, Margaret; give up this wild notion; and," added he, a little wildly himself, "we had better stay and watch *her*."

Constance, who had not spoken yet, now interposed, softly yet firmly:

"Gilbert, Gilbert, this is destroying you. What are these people to you now? What can she be to you? Surely, after all these dreadful things that have passed, the old state can never return? And this watching and following is only perpetuating our wretchedness. Dearest Gilbert, you know I love and feel and would die for you; and, oh! would it not be best for you to have done with it all at once and for ever? It would be a great trial at first, but, in the end, for the best."

Margaret turned on her with scorn and anger. Of late she had noticed this tone of advice in Constance, and had met it with grim and cold opposition.

"So this is *your* advice! I should despise him if he listened to you. It is as foolish, as contemptible. What claim have you to give advice? You can't see that, if he did go, he would be back here in a week. Don't interfere in these things. Keep to your serving and your schooling; above all, don't interfere with me. I have his interest more at heart than any one living, and a thing like this cannot be left half way. Listen, Gilbert. You can stay, if you will, but some one shall go—and I, if no one else."

He started, yet did not oppose. There was excitement in all this. It led up to something; it was something to look forward to, which, to the diseased mind, is a relief.

"I have my passion, my humour," said Margaret, as she hurriedly went about her preparations, "which will not let me rest. I must satisfy it. To make retribution overtake that man is what I live for—the man that has destroyed you, Gilbert."

No one opposed her. There was a grave old French bonne who lived with them, and her Margaret determined to take with her.

CHAPTER XXXII. ON THE TRACK.

At Sody's, the diligence was just starting, the great Normand ponies neighing and plunging, mountains of baggage piled on the top, and lanterns flitting about. Presently the two came up. The luggage was up, the driver in his place giving a skilful crack of his whip—a report like a pistol-shot. Heads were looking out of the window, and the conductor had to call to the two gentlemen, who were talking together, "En voiture, messieurs!" At the last moment a lady and her maid came and found places inside. Then it rolled away on what was then the most terrible and the weariest of all journeys, the most excruciating of purgatories—cramping and sore for the limbs, exhausting, famishing, and perilous. Some found sleep, through that long night of jolting and banging, by the ingenious strap in the roof, on which sore elbows rested, and over which heavy heads nodded. A long night for Margaret! She never nodded, though the old bonne did, who had never been further than Hâvre in her whole life. Margaret kept stark, and stiff, and wakeful, until the grey morning began to break. She knew he was separated from her but by a panel. The long strange night had passed by—dramatic often, when, on a sudden stop and calm, the weary stupified passengers would raise their heads from the strap, look out at the flaring lamps dancing about, peer through the little small-paned window, and see an inviting village inn or post-house, with the glimpse of a fire. They would give worlds for the little snowy chamber, the peace, the calm. But they must go on; for now comes the sudden drag,

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the whip-cracking, and the old jolting, jangling, and general misery. Margaret felt no wish to stop; she was only eager to get forward.

A bright day, but so long and weary! Gilbert was right; that tedious imprisonment would have worn his heart out. All that day Margaret's veil was down; through its thick folds, as she looked from the window on some brief halt, she saw her enemy standing only a foot away, his handsome but anxious eyes resting on hers with the utmost unconsciousness; she could actually smile behind its folds. Some of the passengers wondered who the veiled lady was: he was too absorbed. That night, very late, they were clattering into Paris. Their great vehicle rolled through the archway, in the street of Our Lady of Victories, where, to this day, we may see the yellow. battered Messageries Impériales lying up in ordinary, like old condemned frigates in dock. Here she waited, her veil down, growing yet more excited, and watched the travellers. She and her enemy were under the same roof. It was just midnight. The veiled lady, standing by, saw the two go out. She saw them send for a carriage, go in, and drive away. She was standing by, and heard the direction given to the coachman—"To Auteuil." Then the veiled lady and her maid, besieged by obsequious porters, were put into another carriage, and drove away, also to Auteuil.

That was a long, long drive. Morning was breaking. She saw the hills, and stiff flat French country, like a scene in a play. The long road sloped down and rose again for a mile and more, like a narrow ribbon, and at the end of the ribbon she could make out a little black dot, like a beetle—the carriage which held her enemy. A little beyond this place trees began to come more thickly, and a few châteaux along the roadside. At one of these her coachman, pulling up sharply, told her the carriage had stopped. She looked out, got down into the road, walked on a little, looked round so as to know the marks again, then bade him drive back to the inn of the place. As the carriage turned round, she saw the two little specs descend and pass in. There was something dramatic in the utter unconsciousness of the pursued.

In the morning she walked out along that long road. She soon came to the place—an old château, with great white gate, piers, fine old trees, a long avenue, and a great yellow building. It had not the air of nobility now, and seemed like a school. She hesitated before ringing the great bell at the gate, which was flowery and foliated, according to the old handsome pattern.

She suddenly heard steps, and saw a peasant coming home singing, with a fork on his shoulder. She stopped him.

"Could you tell me, my friend, whose is that château house there?"

"Yonder, where the fiacre is? Fichtre! Don't you know? Pray that you may never be inside of it. It's Dr. Favre's maison de santé—the madhouse."

The other was silent for a moment. "A madhouse!" she repeated.

"Yes—for women. The Sisters of Charity come and look after them. Oh, Dr. Favre is very clever, and has sent away many cured. They send them to him from all parts."

She cried out aloud (but there was no one near to hear), "I have found it! Now we shall see!"

The bell she rang clanged harshly, and after a long, long time a strong-built man came slowly down the avenue, and asked, through the gate, what madame's business was. She had arranged her plan in a moment, and said she wished to speak to the principal about a patient. The porter, blunt but civil, led her into a cold gloomy parlour, and waited.

Dr. Favre's house had a kind of reputation among physicians, as being in advance of the barbarous treatment — chains, waistcoats — then in fashion, and was known favourably even to one or two humane English physicians. The doctor himself, when he came in, seemed kind and benevolent, but scanned her all over with the professional scrutiny with which he "diagnosed" patients.

She had a friend at home whom they were thinking of placing—a dear, dear relation, for whom she would give her life.

Dr. Favre, a really good man, was enthusiastic about his system, and, above all, pleased with English interest.

"Let me show you our place. I shall be most proud to have your good report when you go back to Great Britain. Fine country! I was there once. A great people; and I hope to extend my connexion with it. You know Doctor Parkes, a man of great fame in my way, He came over suddenly, and rang me up last night, or rather this morning. I thought the patients had organised an émeute."

Margaret asked eagerly, "Has he come about a patient here?"

The doctor looked at her with sharp eyes. "He is always coming backwards and forwards," he said, coldly. "He has sent me many patients."

Though she had a sort of horror for the pitiful scenes usually to be found in these places, this was the price to be paid for the discovery she had made. She had to spend an hour and a half, with an air of interest, in viewing the whole establishment, patients, &c., and to listen to all the details. The French doctor had the true foreigner respect for the grandeur of England as the land of inexhaustible wealth, and was really anxious to impress the stranger.

Again Margaret tried to get details.

"Now, what sort of cases have you here? Have you any sick patients?"

"O yes," he said; "now and then. Here are our prospectuses, and here is a little book which gives the principles of our system. And here, on this note-paper, is a picture of the establishment. Well?"

A French sister here entered, and said, in a

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half-whisper—but Margaret heard—"Macquet—she wishes him to be sent for again."

"Very good, Sœur Rosalie," the doctor said, quickly. "Send for him. Now, madame, you will excuse me? I must go my rounds."

There was a quick intelligence in her eye. She had a few more questions to ask—much about *the system*. This bait he could not resist, for he was an honest enthusiast, and proud of his profession and discoveries.

"But, now, about the sick?" said Margaret, craftily. "You can do nothing with them? For the bodily ailment, combined with the psychological——"

"Can't I?" said the doctor, triumphantly. "Why, I have here an instance to the contrary. I could show you a case that I have had here for years, whom we thought ill and dying many times. Why, sickness seems to be almost a means of cure for mental illness. The nearer she seemed to her end, the more rational she became. I have a theory based on this, which will amaze the world one of these days. At this moment she is very ill, and yet has quite, you may say, recovered mentally."

"And you do not think she will die?" said Margaret, excitedly. "Where is your skill?"

The doctor looked astonished for a moment, then seemed pleased at the rare interest taken in him and his system.

"I wonder," he said, abstractedly, "would there be any harm in letting you see her? Really I don't see——"

"Oh, I should so wish it," said Margaret. At that moment they heard the great bell clang.

"Ah! Impossible now," said the doctor. "In fact, you will excuse me. I have to meet some one."

"Why, who is this—is this *her husband?*" said Margaret, abruptly.

The doctor started, and looked into her face with wonder and alarm.

"What do you mean?" he said. "What do you know? Ah, I begin to see."

Margaret hurriedly closed the door, which he had half opened.

"Doctor Favre," she said, "I *do* know something. And I can guess more. I warn you, be on your guard, or you will be indirectly accessory to a dreadful business. That sick woman whom you have here is his wife—you cannot deny it."

"I do deny it. I know nothing of the kind. You are talking idly."

"What, on your honour?"

"On my honour; no."

"Then he has added to his villanies by wearing a false name. What I warn you is, that he is about to marry a girl down at Dieppe, and it is his interest that this wife should be out of the world by a certain day."

"Good gracious!" said the doctor. "Have you any proof for all this?"

"It is for this I have travelled so far night and day. I can give you names, dates, everything. I own to you now my story of a relation was all a fiction, except, indeed, that I *have* a dear, dear brother whom this man has cruelly wronged, and all but driven mad. God knows but we may have to come to you for aid yet. Still you shall not lose by what I have taken up of your precious time." And, still speaking very hurriedly, she laid some gold upon the chimney-piece. "I give you this warning," she said. "Guard her carefully. A man in so desperate a situation as he is may be driven on in spite of himself. What," said Margaret, drawing closer, and seizing him by the wrist as she whispered the words, "what if all this *was told to her* in her present state. That might be the best and most effectual cure in the world, and make your name for you!"

She drew back, and looked at him steadily. The doctor, a gentle, quiet man, seemed confounded by the sudden incidents of this latter part of the interview.

"The shock, the surprise," went on Margaret—"we read of these things—has done wonders. Such a rare opportunity for science may never come again. The experiment would be no harm. What if a letter was written and shown to her? You say she is rational now. I would do it, if you wish, for I too will stop at nothing to save my unhappy brother, whom these people have destroyed among them. Ah!" said Margaret, raising her voice, and pointing with her long finger as the door opened, "*there is the man! Colonel Vivian!*"

Vivian, as he saw this grey and gaunt figure denouncing him, turned ghastly pale, and all but tottered back.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

HERE, for one moment, I find it necessary to call a halt.

On summoning up my own recollections—and on getting Penelope to help me, by consulting her journal—I find that we may pass pretty rapidly over the interval between Mr. Franklin Blake's arrival and Miss Rachel's birthday. For the greater part of that time the days passed, and brought nothing with them worth recording. With your good leave, then, and with Penelope's help, I shall notice certain dates only in this place; reserving to myself to tell the story day by day, once more, as soon as we get to the time when the business of the Moonstone became the chief business of everybody in our house.

This said, we may now go on again—beginning, of course, with the bottle of sweet-smelling ink which I found on the gravel walk at night.

On the next morning (the morning of the twenty-sixth) I showed Mr. Franklin this article of jugglery, and told him what I have already told you. His opinion was, not only that the Indians had been lurking about after the Diamond, but also that they were actually foolish enough to believe in their own magic—meaning thereby the making of signs on a boy's head, and the pouring of ink into a boy's hand, and then expecting him to see persons and things beyond the reach of human vision. In our country, as well as in the East, Mr. Franklin informed me, there are people who practise this curious hocus-pocus (without the ink, however); and who call it by a French name, signifying something like brightness of sight. "Depend upon it," says Mr. Franklin, "the Indians took it for granted that we should keep the Diamond here; and they brought their clairvoyant boy to show them the way to it, if they succeeded in getting into the house last night."

"Do you think they'll try again, sir?" I asked.

"It depends," says Mr. Franklin, "on what the boy can really do. If he can see the Diamond through the iron safe of the bank at Frizinghall, we shall be troubled with no more visits from the Indians for the present. If he can't, we shall have another chance of catching them in the shrubbery, before many more nights are over our heads."

I waited pretty confidently for that latter chance; but, strange to relate, it never came.

Whether the jugglers heard, in the town, of Mr. Franklin having been seen at the bank, and drew their conclusions accordingly; or whether the boy really did see the Diamond where the Diamond was now lodged (which I, for one, flatly disbelieve); or whether, after all, it was a mere effect of chance, this at any rate is the plain truth—not the ghost of an Indian came near the house again, through the weeks that passed before Miss Rachel's birthday. The jugglers remained in and about the town plying their trade; and Mr. Franklin and I remained waiting to see what might happen, and resolute not to put the rogues on their guard by showing our suspicions of them too soon. With this report of the proceedings on either side, ends all that I have to say about the Indians for the present.

On the twenty-ninth of the month, Miss Rachel and Mr. Franklin hit on a new method of working their way together through the time which might otherwise have hung heavy on their hands. There are reasons for taking particular notice here of the occupation that amused them. You will find it has a bearing on something that is still to come.

Gentlefolks in general have a very awkward rock ahead in life—the rock ahead of their own idleness. Their lives being, for the most part, passed in looking about them for something to do, it is curious to see—especially when their tastes are of what is called the intellectual sort—how often they drift blindfold into some nasty pursuit. Nine times out of ten they take to torturing something, or to spoiling something; and they firmly believe they are improving their minds, when the plain truth is, they are only making a mess in the house. I have seen them (ladies, I am sorry to say, as well as gentlemen) go out, day after day, for example, with empty pill-boxes, and catch newts, and beetles, and spiders, and frogs, and come home and stick pins through the miserable wretches, or cut them up, without a pang of remorse, into little pieces. You see my young

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master, or my young mistress, poring over one of their spiders' insides with a magnifying-glass; or you meet one of their frogs walking down-stairs without his head; and when you wonder what this cruel nastiness means, you are told that it means a taste in my young master or my young mistress for natural history. Sometimes, again, you see them occupied for hours together in spoiling a pretty flower with pointed instruments, out of a stupid curiosity to know what the flower is made of. Is its colour any prettier, or its scent any sweeter, when you *do* know? But there! the poor souls must get through the time, you see—they must get through the time. You dabbled in nasty mud, and made pies, when you were a child; and you dabble in nasty science, and dissect spiders, and spoil flowers, when you grow up. In the one case and in the other, the secret of it is, that you have got nothing to think of in your poor empty head, and nothing to do with your poor idle hands. And so it ends in your spoiling canvas with paints, and making a smell in the house; or in keeping tadpoles in a glass box full of dirty water, and turning everybody's stomach in the house; or in chipping off bits of stone here, there, and everywhere, and dropping grit into all the victuals in the house; or in staining your fingers in the pursuit of photography, and doing justice without mercy on everybody's face in the house. It often falls heavy enough, no doubt, on people who are really obliged to get their living, to be forced to work for the clothes that cover them, the roof that shelters them, and the food that keeps them going. But compare the hardest day's work you ever did with the idleness that splits flowers, and pokes its way into spiders' stomachs, and thank your stars that your head has got something it *must* think of, and your hands something that they *must* do.

As for Mr. Franklin and Miss Rachel, they tortured nothing, I am glad to say. They simply confined themselves to making a mess; and all they spoilt, to do them justice, was the panelling of a door.

Mr. Franklin's universal genius, dabbling in everything, dabbled in what he called "decorative painting." He had invented, he informed us, a new mixture to moisten paint with, which he described as a "vehicle." What it was made of, I don't know. What it did, I can tell you in two words: it stank. Miss Rachel being wild to try her hand at the new process, Mr. Franklin sent to London for the materials; mixed them up, with accompaniment of a smell which made the very dogs sneeze when they came into the room; put an apron and a bib over Miss Rachel's gown, and set her to work decorating her own little sitting-room—called, for want of English to name it in, her "boudoir." They began with the inside of the door. Mr. Franklin scraped off all the nice varnish with pumice stone, and made what he described as a surface to work on. Miss Rachel then covered the surface, under his directions and with his help, with patterns and devices—griffins, birds, flowers, cupids, and such like, copied from designs made by a famous Italian painter, whose name escapes me—the one, I mean, who stocked the world with Virgin Marys, and had a sweetheart at the baker's. Viewed as work, this decoration was slow to do, and dirty to deal with. But our young lady and gentleman never seemed to tire of it. When they were not riding, or seeing company, or taking their meals, or piping their songs, there they were with their heads together, as busy as bees, spoiling the door. Who was the poet who said that Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do? If he had occupied my place in the family, and had seen Miss Rachel with her brush, and Mr. Franklin with his vehicle, he could have written nothing truer of either of them than that.

The next date worthy of notice is Sunday, the fourth of June.

On that evening, we, in the servants' hall, debated a domestic question for the first time, which, like the decoration of the door, has its bearing on something that is still to come.

Seeing the pleasure which Mr. Franklin and Miss Rachel took in each other's society, and noting what a pretty match they were in all personal respects, we naturally speculated on the chance of their putting their heads together with other objects in view besides the ornamenting of a door. Some of us said there would be a wedding in the house before the summer was over. Others (led by me) admitted it was likely enough Miss Rachel might be married; but we doubted (for reasons which will presently appear) whether her bridegroom would be Mr. Franklin Blake.

That Mr. Franklin was in love, on his side, nobody who saw and heard him could doubt. The difficulty was to fathom Miss Rachel. Let me do myself the honour of making you acquainted with her; after which, I will leave you to fathom her yourself—if you can.

My young lady's eighteenth birthday was the birthday now coming, on the twenty-first of June. If you happen to like dark women (who, I am informed, have gone out of fashion latterly in the gay world), and if you have no particular prejudice in favour of size, I answer for Miss Rachel as one of the prettiest girls your eyes ever looked on. She was small and slim, but all in fine proportion from top to toe. To see her sit down, to see her get up, and specially to see her walk, was enough to satisfy any man in his senses that the graces of her figure (if you will pardon me the expression) were in her flesh, and not in her clothes. Her hair was the blackest I ever saw. Her eyes matched her hair. Her nose was not quite large enough, I admit. Her mouth and chin were (to quote Mr. Franklin) morsels for the gods; and her complexion (on the same undeniable authority) was as warm as the sun itself, with this great advantage over the sun, that it was always in nice order to look at. Add to the foregoing, that she carried her head as upright as a dart,

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in a dashing, spirited, thoroughbred way—that she had a clear voice, with a ring of the right metal in it, and a smile that began very prettily in her eyes before it got to her lips—and there behold the portrait of her, to the best of my painting, as large as life!

And what about her disposition next? Had this charming creature no faults? She had just as many faults as you have, ma'am—neither more nor less.

To put it seriously, my dear pretty Miss Rachel, possessing a host of graces and attractions, had one defect, which strict impartiality compels me to acknowledge. She was unlike most other girls of her age, in this—that she had ideas of her own, and was stiff-necked enough to set the fashions themselves at defiance, if the fashions didn't suit her views. In trifles, this independence of hers was all well enough; but in matters of importance, it carried her (as my lady thought, and as I thought) too far. She judged for herself, as few women of twice her age judge in general; never asked your advice; never told you beforehand what she was going to do; never came with secrets and confidences to anybody, from her mother downwards. In little things and great, with people she loved, and people she hated (and she did both with equal heartiness), Miss Rachel always went on a way of her own, sufficient for herself in the joys and the sorrows of her life. Over and over again I have heard my lady say, "Rachel's best friend and Rachel's worst enemy are, one and the other—Rachel herself."

Add one thing more to this, and I have done.

With all her secresy, and all her self-will, there was not so much as the shadow of anything false in her. I never remember her breaking her word; I never remember her saying, No, and meaning, Yes. I can call to mind, in her childhood, more than one occasion when the good little soul took the blame, and suffered the punishment, for some fault committed by a playfellow whom she loved. Nobody ever knew her to confess to it, when the thing was found out, and she was charged with it afterwards. But nobody ever knew her to lie about it, either. She looked you straight in the face, and shook her little saucy head, and said plainly, "I won't tell you!" Punished again for this, she would own to being sorry for saying "won't;" but, bread and water notwithstanding, she never told you. Self-willed—devilish self-willed sometimes—I grant; but the finest creature, nevertheless, that ever walked the ways of this lower world. Perhaps you think you see a certain contradiction here? In that case, a word in your ear. Study your wife closely, for the next four-and-twenty hours. If your good lady doesn't exhibit something in the shape of a contradiction in that time, Heaven help you!—you have married a monster.

I have now brought you acquainted with Miss Rachel, which you will find puts us face to face, next, with the question of that young lady's matrimonial views.

On June the twelfth, an invitation from my mistress was sent to a gentleman in London, to come and help to keep Miss Rachel's birthday. This was the fortunate individual on whom I believed her heart to be privately set! Like Mr. Franklin, he was a cousin of hers. His name was Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.

My lady's second sister (don't be alarmed we are not going very deep into family matters this time)—my lady's second sister, I say, had a disappointment in love; and taking a husband afterwards, on the neck-or-nothing principle, made what they call a misalliance. There was terrible work in the family when the Honourable Caroline insisted on marrying plain Mr. Ablewhite, the banker at Frizinghall. He was very rich and very good tempered, and he begot a prodigious large family—all in his favour, so far. But he had presumed to raise himself from a low station in the world—and that was against him. However, Time and the progress of modern enlightenment put things right; and the misalliance passed muster very well. We are all getting liberal now; and (provided you can scratch me, if I scratch you) what do I care, in or out of Parliament, whether you are a Dustman or a Duke? That's the modern way of looking at it—and I keep up with the modern way. The Ablewhites lived in a fine house and grounds, a little out of Frizinghall. Very worthy people, and greatly respected in the neighbourhood. We shall not be much troubled with them, in these pages—excepting Mr. Godfrey, who was Mr. Ablewhite's second son, and who must take his proper place here, if you please, for Miss Rachel's sake.

With all his brightness and cleverness and general good qualities, Mr. Franklin's chance of topping Mr. Godfrey in our young lady's estimation was, in my opinion, a very poor chance indeed.

In the first place, Mr. Godfrey was, in point of size, the finest man by far of the two. He stood over six feet high; he had a beautiful red and white colour; a smooth round face, shaved as bare as your hand; and a head of lovely long flaxen hair, falling negligently over the poll of his neck. But why do I try to give you this personal description of him? If you ever subscribed to a Ladies' Charity in London, you know Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite as well as I do. He was a barrister by profession; a ladies' man by temperament; and a good Samaritan by choice. Female benevolence and female destitution could do nothing without him. Maternal societies for confining poor women; Magdalen societies for rescuing poor women; strong-minded societies for putting poor women into poor men's places, and leaving the men to shift for themselves;—he was vice-president, manager, referee to them all. Wherever there was a table with a committee of ladies sitting round it in council, there was Mr. Godfrey at the

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bottom of the board, keeping the temper of the committee, and leading the dear creatures along the thorny ways of business, hat in hand. I do suppose this was the most accomplished philanthropist (on a small independence) that England ever produced. As a speaker at charitable meetings, the like of him for drawing your tears and your money was not easy to find. He was quite a public character. The last time I was in London, my mistress gave me two treats. She sent me to the theatre to see a dancing-woman who was all the rage; and she sent me to Exeter Hall to hear Mr. Godfrey. The lady did it, with a band of music. The gentleman did it, with a handkerchief and a glass of water. Crowds at the performance with the legs. Ditto at the performance with the tongue. And, with all this, the sweetest-tempered person (I allude to Mr. Godfrey)—the simplest and pleasantest and easiest to please—you ever met with. He loved everybody. And everybody loved *him*. What chance had Mr. Franklin—what chance had anybody of average reputation and capacities—against such a man as this?

On the fourteenth came Mr. Godfrey's answer.

He accepted my mistress's invitation, from the Wednesday of the birthday to the evening of Friday—when his duties to the Ladies' Charities would oblige him to return to town. He also enclosed a copy of verses on what he elegantly called his cousin's "natal day." Miss Rachel, I was informed, joined Mr. Franklin in making fun of the verses at dinner; and Penelope, who was all on Mr. Franklin's side, asked me, in great triumph, what I thought of that. "Miss Rachel has led *you* off on a false scent, my dear," I replied; "but *my* nose is not so easily mystified. Wait till Mr. Ablewhite's verses are followed by Mr. Ablewhite himself."

My daughter replied, that Mr. Franklin might strike in, and try his luck, before the verses were followed by the poet. In favour of this view, I must acknowledge that Mr. Franklin left no chance untried of winning Miss Rachel's good graces.

Though one of the most inveterate smokers I ever met with, he gave up his cigar, because she said, one day, she hated the stale smell of it in his clothes. He slept so badly, after this effort of self-denial, for want of the composing effect of the tobacco to which he was used, and came down morning after morning looking so haggard and worn, that Miss Rachel herself begged him to take to his cigars again. No! he would take to nothing again that could cause her a moment's annoyance; he would fight it out resolutely, and get back his sleep, sooner or later, by main force of patience in waiting for it. Such devotion as this, you may say (as some of them said down-stairs), could never fail of producing the right effect on Miss Rachel—backed up, too, as it was, by the decorating work every day on the door. All very well—but she had a photograph of Mr. Godfrey in her bedroom; represented speaking at a public meeting, with all his air blown out by the breath of his own eloquence, and his eyes, most lovely, charming the money out of your pockets. What do you say to that? Every morning—as Penelope herself owned to me—there was the man whom the women couldn't do without, looking on, in effigy, while Miss Rachel was having her hair combed. He would be looking on, in reality, before long—that was my opinion of it.

June the sixteenth brought an event which made Mr. Franklin's chance look, to my mind, a worse chance than ever.

A strange gentleman, speaking English with a foreign accent, came that morning to the house, and asked to see Mr. Franklin Blake on business. The business could not possibly have been connected with the Diamond, for these two reasons—first, that Mr. Franklin told me nothing about it; secondly, that he communicated it (after the strange gentleman had gone away again) to my lady. She probably hinted something about it next to her daughter. At any rate, Miss Rachel was reported to have said some severe things to Mr. Franklin, at the piano that evening, about the people he had lived among, and the principles he had adopted, in foreign parts. The next day, for the first time, nothing was done towards the decoration of the door. I suspect, some imprudence of Mr. Franklin's on the Continent—with a woman or a debt at the bottom of it—had followed him to England. But that is all guesswork. In this case, not only Mr. Franklin, but my lady too, for a wonder, left me in the dark.

On the seventeenth, to all appearance, the cloud passed away again. They returned to their decorating work on the door, and seemed to be as good friends as ever. If Penelope was to be believed, Mr. Franklin had seized the opportunity of the reconciliation to make an offer to Miss Rachel, and had neither been accepted nor refused. My girl was sure (from signs and tokens which I need not trouble you with) that her young mistress had fought Mr. Franklin off by declining to believe that he was in earnest, and had then secretly regretted treating him in that way, afterwards. Though Penelope was admitted to more familiarity with her young mistress than maids generally are—for the two had been almost brought up together as children—still I knew Miss Rachel's reserved character too well to believe that she would show her mind to anybody in this way. What my daughter told me, on the present occasion, was, as I suspected, more what she wished than what she really knew.

On the nineteenth another event happened. We had the doctor in the house professionally. He was summoned to prescribe for a person whom I have had occasion to present to you in these pages—our second housemaid, Rosanna Spearman.

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This poor girl—who had puzzled me, as you know already, at the Shivering Sand—puzzled me more than once again, in the interval time of which I am now writing. Penelope's notion that her fellow-servant was in love with Mr. Franklin (which my daughter, by my orders, kept strictly secret) seemed to me just as absurd as ever. But I must own that what I myself saw, and what my daughter saw also, of our second housemaid's conduct began to look mysterious, to say the least of it.

For example, the girl constantly put herself in Mr. Franklin's way—very slyly and quietly, but she did it. He took about as much notice of her as he took of the cat: it never seemed to occur to him to waste a look on Rosanna's plain face. The poor thing's appetite, never much, fell away dreadfully; and her eyes, in the morning, showed plain signs of waking and crying at night. One day Penelope made an awkward discovery, which we hushed up on the spot. She caught Rosanna at Mr. Franklin's dressing-table, secretly removing a rose which Miss Rachel had given him to wear in his button-hole, and putting another rose like it, of her own picking, in its place. She was, after that, once or twice impudent to me, when I gave her a well-meant general hint to be careful in her conduct; and, worse still, she was not over-respectful now, on the few occasions when Miss Rachel accidentally spoke to her.

My lady noticed the change, and asked me what I thought about it. I tried to screen the girl by answering that I thought she was out of health; and it ended in the doctor being sent for, as already mentioned, on the nineteenth. He said it was her nerves, and doubted if she was fit for service. My lady offered to remove her for change of air to one of our farms, inland. She begged and prayed, with the tears in her eyes, to be let to stop; and, in an evil hour, I advised my lady to try her for a little longer. As the event proved, and as you will soon see, this was the worst advice I could have given. If I could only have looked a little way into the future, I would have taken Rosanna Spearman out of the house, then and there, with my own hand.

On the twentieth, there came a note from Mr. Godfrey. He had arranged to stop at Frizinghall that night, having occasion to consult his father on business. On the afternoon of the next day, he and his two eldest sisters would ride over to us on horseback, in good time before dinner. An elegant little casket in china accompanied the note, presented to Miss Rachel, with her cousin's love and best wishes. Mr. Franklin had only given her a plain locket not worth half the money. My daughter Penelope, nevertheless—such is the obstinacy of women—still backed him to win.

Thanks be to Heaven, we have arrived at the eve of the birthday at last! You will own, I think, that I have got you over the ground, this time, without much loitering by the way. Cheer up! I'll ease you with another new chapter here—and, what is more, that chapter shall take you straight into the thick of the story.

CHAPTER IX.

June the twenty-first, the day of the birthday, was cloudy and unsettled at sunrise, but towards noon it cleared up bravely.

We, in the servants' hall, began this happy anniversary, as usual, by offering our little presents to Miss Rachel, with the regular speech delivered annually by me as the chief. I follow the plan adopted by the Queen in opening Parliament—namely, the plan of saying much the same thing regularly every year. Before it is delivered, my speech (like the Queen's) is looked for as eagerly as if nothing of the kind had ever been heard before. When it is delivered, and turns out not to be the novelty anticipated, though they grumble a little, they look forward hopefully to something newer next year. An easy people to govern, in the Parliament and in the Kitchen—that's the moral of it.

After breakfast, Mr. Franklin and I had a private conference on the subject of the Moonstone—the time having now come for removing it from the bank at Frizinghall, and placing it in Miss Rachel's own hands.

Whether he had been trying to make love to his cousin again, and had got a rebuff—or whether his broken rest, night after night, was aggravating the queer contradictions and uncertainties in his character—I don't know. But certain it is, that Mr. Franklin failed to show himself at his best on the morning of the birthday. He was in twenty different minds about the Diamond in as many minutes. For my part, I stuck fast by the plain facts as we knew them. Nothing had happened to justify us in alarming my lady on the subject of the jewel; and nothing could alter the legal obligation that now lay on Mr. Franklin to put it in his cousin's possession. That was my view of the matter; and, twist and turn it as he might, he was forced in the end to make it his view too. We arranged that he was to ride over, after lunch, to Frizinghall, and bring the Diamond back, with Mr. Godfrey and the two young ladies, in all probability, to keep him company on the way home again.

This settled, our young gentleman went back to Miss Rachel.

They consumed the whole morning, and part of the afternoon, in the everlasting business of decorating the door, Penelope standing by to mix the colours, as directed; and my lady, as luncheon-time drew near, going in and out of the room, with her handkerchief to her nose (for they used a deal of Mr. Franklin's vehicle that day), and trying vainly to get the two artists away from their work. It was three o'clock before they took off their aprons, and released Penelope (much the worse for the vehicle), and cleaned themselves of their mess. But they had done what they wanted—they had finished the door on the birthday; and proud enough they were of it. The griffins, cupids, and so on,

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were, I must own, most beautiful to behold: though so many in number, so entangled in flowers and devices, and so topsy-turvy in their actions and attitudes, that you felt them unpleasantly in your head for hours after you had done with the pleasure of looking at them. If I add that Penelope ended her part of the morning's work by being sick in the back kitchen, it is in no unfriendly spirit towards the vehicle. No! no! It left off stinking when it dried; and if Art requires these sort of sacrifices—though the girl is my own daughter—I say, let Art have them!

Mr. Franklin snatched a morsel from the luncheon-table, and rode off to Frizinghall—to escort his cousins, as he told my lady. To fetch the Moonstone, as was privately known to himself and to me.

This being one of the high festivals on which I took my place at the side-board, in command of the attendance at table, I had plenty to occupy my mind while Mr. Franklin was away. Having seen to the wine, and reviewed my men and women who were to wait at dinner, I retired to collect myself before the company came. A whiff of—you know what, and a turn at a certain book which I have had occasion to mention in these pages, composed me, body and mind. I was aroused from what I am inclined to think must have been, not a nap, but a reverie, by the clatter of horses' hoofs outside; and, going to the door, received a cavalcade comprising Mr. Franklin and his three cousins, escorted by one of old Mr. Ablewhite's grooms.

Mr. Godfrey struck me, strangely enough, as being like Mr. Franklin in this respect—that he did not seem to be in his customary spirits. He kindly shook hands with me as usual, and was most politely glad to see his old friend Betteredge wearing so well. But there was a sort of cloud over him, which I couldn't at all account for; and when I asked how he had found his father in health, he answered, rather shortly, "Much as usual." However, the two Miss Ablewhites were cheerful enough for twenty—which more than restored the balance. They were nearly as big as their brother; spanking, yellow-haired, rosy lasses, overflowing with superabundant flesh and blood; bursting from head to foot with health and spirits. The legs of the poor horses trembled with carrying them; and when they jumped from their saddles (without waiting to be helped), I declare they bounced on the ground as if they were made of india-rubber. Everything the Miss Ablewhites said began with a large O; everything they did was done with a bang; and they giggled and screamed, in season and out of season, on the smallest provocation. Bouncers—that's what I call them.

Under cover of the noise made by the young ladies, I had an opportunity of saying a private word to Mr. Franklin in the hall.

"Have you got the Diamond safe, sir?"

He nodded, and tapped the breast-pocket of his coat.

"Have you seen anything of the Indians?"

"Not a glimpse." With that answer, he asked for my lady, and, hearing she was in the small drawing-room, went there straight. The bell rang, before he had been a minute in the room, and Penelope was sent to tell Miss Rachel that Mr. Franklin Blake wanted to speak to her.

Crossing the hall, about half an hour afterwards, I was brought to a sudden standstill by an outbreak of screams from the small drawing-room. I can't say I was at all alarmed; for I recognised in the screams the favourite large O of the Miss Ablewhites. However, I went in (on pretence of asking for instructions about the dinner) to discover whether anything serious had really happened.

There stood Miss Rachel at the table, like a person fascinated, with the Colonel's unlucky Diamond in her hand. There, on either side of her, knelt the two Bouncers, devouring the jewel with their eyes, and screaming with exstacy every time it flashed on them in a new light. There, at the opposite side of the table, stood Mr. Godfrey, clapping his hands like a large child, and singing out softly, "Exquisite! exquisite!" There sat Mr. Franklin, in a chair by the book-case, tugging at his beard, and looking anxiously towards the window. And there, at the window, stood the object he was contemplating—my lady, having the extract from the Colonel's Will in her hand, and keeping her back turned on the whole of the company.

She faced me, when I asked for my instructions; and I saw the family frown gathering over her eyes, and the family temper twitching at the corners of her mouth.

"Come to my room in half an hour," she answered. "I shall have something to say to you then."

With those words, she went out. It was plain enough that she was posed by the same difficulty which had posed Mr. Franklin and me in our conference at the Shivering Sand. Was the legacy of the Moonstone a proof that she had treated her brother with cruel injustice? or was it a proof that he was worse than the worst she had ever thought of him? Serious questions, those, for my lady to determine, while her daughter, innocent of all knowledge of the Colonel's character, stood there with the Colonel's birthday gift in her hand.

Before I could leave the room, in my turn, Miss Rachel, always considerate to the old servant who had been in the house when she was born, stopped me. "Look, Gabriel!" she said, and flashed the jewel before my eyes in a ray of sunlight that poured through the window.

Lord bless us! it *was* a Diamond! As large, or nearly, as a plover's egg! The light that streamed from it was like the light of the harvest moon. When you looked down into the stone, you looked into a yellow deep that drew your eyes into it so that they saw nothing else. It seemed unfathomable: this jewel, that you

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could hold between your finger and thumb, seemed unfathomable as the heavens themselves. We set it in the sun, and then shut the light out of the room, and it shone awfully out of the depths of its own brightness, with a moony gleam, in the dark. No wonder Miss Rachel was fascinated: no wonder her cousins screamed. The Diamond laid such a hold on *me* that I burst out with as large an "O" as the Bouncers themselves. The only one of us who kept his senses was Mr. Godfrey. He put an arm round each of his sisters' waists, and, looking compassionately backwards and forwards from the Diamond to me, said, "Carbon, Betteredge! mere carbon, my good friend, after all!"

His object, I suppose, was to instruct me. All he did, however, was to remind me of the dinner. I hobbled off to my army of waiters down-stairs. As I went out, Mr. Godfrey said, "Dear old Betteredge, I have the truest regard for him!" He was embracing his sisters, and ogling Miss Rachel, while he honoured me with that testimony of affection. Something like a stock of love to draw on, *there!* Mr. Franklin was a perfect savage by comparison with him.

At the end of half an hour, I presented myself, as directed, in my lady's room.

What passed between my mistress and me, on this occasion, was, in the main, a repetition of what had passed between Mr. Franklin and me at the Shivering Sand—with this difference, that I took care to keep my own counsel about the jugglers, seeing that nothing had happened to justify me in alarming my lady on this head. When I received my dismissal, I could see that she took the blackest view possible of the Colonel's motives, and that she was bent on getting the Moonstone out of her daughter's possession at the first opportunity.

On my way back to my own part of the house, I was encountered by Mr. Franklin. He wanted to know if I had seen anything of his cousin Rachel. I had seen nothing of her. Could I tell him where his cousin Godfrey was? I didn't know; but I began to suspect that Cousin Godfrey might not be far away from Cousin Rachel. Mr. Franklin's suspicions apparently took the same turn. He tugged hard at his beard, and went and shut himself up in the library, with a bang of the door that had a world of meaning in it.

I was interrupted no more in the business of preparing for the birthday dinner till it was time for me to smarten myself up for receiving the company. Just as I had got my white waistcoat on, Penelope presented herself at my toilet, on pretence of brushing what little hair I have got left, and improving the tie of my white cravat. My girl was in high spirits, and I saw she had something to say to me. She gave me a kiss on the top of my bald head, and whispered, "News for you, father! Miss Rachel has refused him."

"Who's '*him*'?" I asked.

"The ladies' committee-man, father," says Penelope. "A nasty sly fellow! I hate him for trying to supplant Mr. Franklin!"

If I had had breath enough, I should certainly have protested against this indecent way of speaking of an eminent philanthropic character. But my daughter happened to be improving the tie of my cravat at that moment, and the whole strength of her feelings found its way into her fingers. I never was more nearly strangled in my life.

"I saw him take her away alone into the rose-garden," says Penelope. "And I waited behind the holly to see how they came back. They had gone out arm-in-arm, both laughing. They came back walking separate, as grave as grave could be, and looking straight away from each other in a manner which there was no mistaking. I never was more delighted, father, in my life! There's one woman in the world who can resist Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, at any rate; and, if I was a lady, I should be another!"

Here I should have protested again. But my daughter had got the hair-brush by this time, and the whole strength of her feelings had passed into *that*. If you are bald, you will understand how she scarified me. If you are not, skip this bit, and thank God you have got something in the way of a defence between your hair-brush and your head.

"Just on the other side of the holly," Penelope went on, "Mr. Godfrey came to a standstill. 'You prefer,' says he, 'that I should stop here as if nothing had happened?' Miss Rachel turned on him like lightning. 'You have accepted my mother's invitation,' she said; 'and you are here to meet her guests. Unless you wish to make a scandal in the house, you will remain, of course!' She went on a few steps, and then seemed to relent a little. 'Let us forget what has passed, Godfrey,' she said, 'and let us remain cousins still.' She gave him her hand. He kissed it, which *I* should have considered taking a liberty, and then she left him. He waited a little by himself, with his head down, and his heel grinding a hole slowly in the gravel walk; you never saw a man look more put out in your life. 'Awkward!' he said between his teeth, when he looked up, and went on to the house—'very awkward!' If that was his opinion of himself, he was quite right. Awkward enough, I'm sure. And the end of it is, father, what I told you all along," cries Penelope, finishing me off with a last scarification, the hottest of all. "Mr. Franklin's the man!"

I got possession of the hair-brush, and opened my lips to administer the reproof which, you will own, my daughter's language and conduct richly deserved.

Before I could say a word, the crash of carriage-wheels outside struck in, and stopped me. The first of the dinner-company had come. Penelope instantly ran off. I put on my coat, and looked in the glass. My head was as red as a lobster; but, in other respects, I was as nicely dressed for the ceremonies of the evening as a man need be. I got into the hall just in time to announce the two first of

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the guests. You needn't feel particularly interested about them. Only the philanthropist's father and mother—Mr. and Mrs. Ablewhite.

THE LANGUAGE OF ANIMALS.

Who has not read the Arabian Nights Entertainments? I pity the man or woman, if any such there be, who has not; or, if I do not pity them, I envy the treat in store for them, if they will turn from the error of their ways, and read the fascinating book from beginning to end. Among the stories which first fixes attention is that of the merchant who understood the language of animals. And a delightful story it is. In Esop's Fables, also, where the beasts and the birds talk to each other and to mankind, no reader, who has a proper faith in what he reads, is in the least degree surprised at the sagacity which the animals put into the most natural language imaginable. The fox *did* say the grapes were sour; the wolf *did* fix an unconscionable quarrel upon the poor little lamb which it wanted to devour, and the lion *did* really express to the men its candid opinion upon the favouritism of portrait-painting. At all events, the youthful imagination sees no absurdity in the idea. This brings me to my subject—Is fable entirely wrong in this respect, and have not all animals a language of their own? Have not birds a language which other birds understand? and insects? and, for that matter, fishes? In the pride of our superior knowledge, we assert of ourselves that man is the only animal who kindles a fire, cooks food, makes clothes, and is endowed with the faculty of articulate speech. While granting our own monopoly of fire-making, cookery, and tailoring, are we quite sure that we do not arrogate to ourselves a little too much superiority when we claim that to us alone is accorded the glorious privilege of language? Philosophers are very dogmatic on the subject. "However much," says Professor Max Müller, "the frontiers of the animal kingdom have been pushed forward, so that at one time the line of demarcation between animal and man seemed to depend on a mere fold of the brain, there is *one* barrier which no one has yet ventured to touch—the barrier of language." The professor proceeds to quote Lord Monboddo and John Locke. The first says, that "As yet no animal has been discovered in the possession of language, not even the beaver, who of all the animals we know, that are not like the ourang-outang, of our own species, comes nearest to us in sagacity." Locke says, "The power of abstracting is not at all in brutes; and the having of general ideas is that which puts a perfect distinction between man and brutes. For it is evident we observe no footsteps in these of making use of general signs for universal ideas; from which we have reason to imagine that they have not the faculty of abstracting or making general ideas, since they have no use of *words* or of other general signs." Are not these philosophers a little too confident?

We know that there are many creatures on the earth which are utterly unconscious of the existence of man; and we might, if we were not too proud, ask ourselves, in like manner, if there may not be many things in the animal creation of which man is necessarily unconscious. If I walk through the woods on a bright summer day, or sit under the oaken or beechen shadows, I am conscious of a tide and tremor of life around me. I hear the birds singing, twittering, and chattering, each species with its own peculiar note. I hear the bees and the flies buzzing with more or less vigour, pertinacity, and volume of sound; while a faint echo comes from the distant pastures, of the bleating of sheep, the lowing of cattle, the barking of shepherds' dogs, and the lusty crowing of the cocks in the farm-yard. I ask myself whether all these various sounds may not be as many languages, perfectly intelligible to the creatures which speak them to each other, though unintelligible to me. I know that some animals—the dog especially —understand many words that I employ, if I speak emphatically, and that he will do what I tell him; but, if I do not understand what one dog says to another, whose fault is it, mine or the dog's? Man may doubtless claim that he has a larger vocabulary than the inferior creation. He has wants more numerous, ideas more abundant; hopes, fears, recollections, and aspirations unknown perhaps to their limited intelligence, and must consequently have a language more copious than theirs. Language keeps pace with knowledge, intelligence, and imagination. A Shakespeare may require fourteen thousand words to express all his thoughts, and tell all his marvellous stories; a scientific writer, obliged to be as accurate, may require a few thousand more; a modern gentleman, of average education, may manage to express all his wants, wishes, and emotions, and carry on the usual intercourse of life and society, with four thousand; while an ordinary peasant in some of our rural districts sometimes gets on satisfactorily to himself, his family, and his associates with about five hundred, and can manage to transact all his business with his horse in half a dozen. And as it does not follow that we can truly call such a peasant a man without a language, even when speaking to his horse, neither does it follow in the case of a quadruped, that may have but four or five or even but one word or sound to express its meaning, that such quadruped is without a language which its fellow-quadrupeds may understand. A single sound, with a rising or a falling accent, or a stronger or weaker emphasis, may express different meanings; and the same sound, repeated, twice, thrice, or four times, with the rising or the falling accent at the first, second, third, or fourth repetition, may contain a whole vocabulary for the simple creatures who emit and understand the sound, and whose wants and emotions are as circumscribed as their speech.

Professor Max Müller supplies us with an illustration in point. He says that in the Chinese,

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the Annamitic, and likewise in the Siamese and Burmese languages, one single sound does duty in this way for a great variety of meanings. "Thus," he says, "in Annamitic, '*ba*,' pronounced with the grave accent, means a lady or an ancestor; pronounced with a sharp accent, it means the favourite of a prince; pronounced with the semi-grave accent, it means what has been thrown away; pronounced with the grave circumflex, it means what is left of a fruit after the juice has been squeezed out; pronounced with no accent, it means three; pronounced with the ascending or interrogative accent, it means a box on the ear. Thus,

Ba, Bà, Bâ, Bá

is said to mean, if properly pronounced, 'Three ladies gave a box on the ear to the favourite of the prince.'"

In our own and in several European languages identical sounds have various meanings; the English "box" being one example, and the French "sang," "s'en," "sans," "sent," "cent" another. If we consider this subject without a prejudice, may we not see reason to think that the "Bow! wow! wow!" of our estimable friend, the dog, may be susceptible of a great variety of meanings, according to the tone and accentuation he gives to those fundamental words or syllables of his language, or the number of repetitions either of the "*bow*" or the "*wow*"? Sometimes, when a dog barks, he will omit the "*bow*" altogether, and say, "*wow! wow! wow!*" very sharply and rapidly; and it can be scarcely supposed that so very intelligent a creature has no reason for this little change in its customary phraseology. Max Müller positively states that "no animal thinks, and no animal speaks, except man." Every one who has made a friend of an animal —and there are few who have not—must dispute the first part of this assertion. When a dog is presented with a bone after he has had his dinner and satisfied his hunger, he thinks the bone is too good to be rejected, and that it would be wise in him to put it into a place of safety, to be ready when required, just as a man puts his money in the bank. Accordingly, he takes his opportunity to go into the garden and bury it; and, if watched in the process, will dig it up again with his nose, and carry it off to a safer spot. Is not this *thinking?* When I put on my hat and overcoat, and take my walking-stick from its accustomed place in the hall, my dog thinks, and speedily knows, that I am going out; and very plainly asks me, not only by the sudden sparkling of his expressive eyes and the wagging of his equally expressive tail, but by a succession of joyous barks and yelps, whether I mean to take him along with me; and, if I refuse the request, very plainly expresses his sorrow for my decision.

Mr. Max Müller says elsewhere in his lecture, that "language and thought are inseparable." If this statement be correct, it follows, from his own showing, that if we can prove the possession of a faculty for thinking in the members of the inferior creation, we must admit that they may possess a language which they may thoroughly understand, and which may be quite sufficient for the expression of their limited ideas. It is difficult to believe that the crow has not two or three, and the nightingale at least a dozen notes in its voice, and that these notes may not, in their interchange, reiteration, and succession, express ideas with which crows are familiar, and whole poems or histories, such as nightingales love to tell and repeat to one another; and that any one of the many notes in the sweet song of the skylark may not, according to its accentuation, or even to its place in the gamut, express as many shades of meaning as the Annamitic "BA" of which Mr. Max Müller discourses. That we cannot understand the language is no proof that it is not a language; for, if it were, the nations of the earth might mutually accuse each other of being as speechless as the brutes. It is quite as difficult for the uneducated and untrained ear—say, of an Englishman—to distinguish the several sounds uttered by a Frenchman, a Russian, a Spaniard, or a Gaelic Highlander, speaking rapidly, as it is to distinguish from one another the separate sounds in the song of the lark or the nightingale, or the twitter of sparrows. In Scotland the cuckoo is called the gowk, as it used to be formerly called in England; and the saying remains in the northern parts of the island that a very silly person is "as stupid as a gowk." "A gowk" means a fool, or a person that is always saying the same thing, and has but one idea—like a cuckoo. But no one thinks of applying such an epithet of scorn to a real singing-bird, that has many notes in its voice, and consequently expresses a larger number of ideas. Every one knows the paucity of mere sounds in a musical octave—the seven notes of the gamut, with their flats and sharps; but out of these seven come all the national melodies, all the glees and madrigals, all the popular tunes, all the dances and galops, all the reels and strathspeys, all the hymns and songs, all the oratorios, all the grand and little operas, that ever have been or ever will be composed; so that, if we grant even so few as seven notes to the lark or the nightingale, we grant it a language, or, at all events, the possibility of a language or a vocabulary, quite as rich as that of Hodge, the farm-labourer, with his five or six hundred words, or that of the little child, that has scarcely half the number.

These remarks, speculations, or arguments, whichever the reader may consider them to be, apply only to those sounds at the command of the inferior creation which may, for all we know to the contrary, serve as the constituent syllables of the words which make their language, and not to those other languages of the eye, or the gesture, which human beings with articulate speech at their disposal so constantly employ. The eyes of man or woman, as everybody knows and has felt, can express love, or hate, or fear, or anger, without the necessity of speech;

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and so may the eyes of all creatures that possess the gift of sight. Gestures and signs, in like manner, as we know, not only by the example of the deaf and dumb, who have been taught the alphabet of the fingers, but by what we may daily witness in the conduct of domestic animals towards each other, may serve largely for the expression of love or hatred. This power of language even Lord Monboddo and Mr. Locke would have conceded; and so, doubtless, would Mr. Max Müller. In this manner the meanest things that live and feel have power of communication with their fellows, as well as with such a superior creature as man, when they become either attached to or afraid of him. But the question whether some kind of articulate speech is not at their command — available among themselves, though not to man, on account of man's incapacity to bring down his big intellect into the little circle of theirs, or of the dulness of his ear to sounds that may be very clear, sharp, and well defined to theirs—remains unaffected by their undoubted possession of the mute language of gesture and the eyes. The spider, with his hundred eyes, cannot see me if I stand at the distance of a few inches from his cunning web; but would Mr. Spider, if he were a philosopher, be justified, on that account, in asserting that I was not there, or even that I did not exist? Is it *my* imperfection that he cannot behold me? In like manner, is it not my imperfection if I cannot see or hear that which smaller things can both hear and see? The animalcule in a drop of water, that sees and sometimes eats smaller animalcules than himself, is doubtless in entire ignorance of all beyond the circle of his water-drop; but he would be a silly animalcule if he were, on that account, to deny the existence of anything bigger and nobler than himself. And you and I, dear reader, may never have heard a fly talk to a fly, or a worm to a worm, or been able to make out the language of the birds when they mate about St. Valentine's Day; but the fly may have talked to the fly, the worm to the worm, and the bird to the bird, all the same for our incapacity to hear the talk of the one or understand the song of the other.

Most people who are gifted with the faculty of observing, and blessed with the privilege of enjoying, the sights and sounds of nature, and who have either resided in, or been frequent visitors to, the country, must at one time or other have remarked the actions and behaviour of crows and rooks, or, in the quaint language of the old Scottish poet, Alexander Montgomery, must have listened to, and been "deaved with the din"

> **And jargon of the jangling jays,**
> **The craiking craws, and keckling kays.**

No one who has at all studied the habits of these birds will think it a very daring assertion that the cry or sound of "caw" may be as susceptible of a variety of meanings as the Annamitic "ba," or the English "box," or the French "sang," or the canine "bow-wow!"—and that its duplication into "caw! caw!" or into a still greater number of repetitions, is not without a purpose and signification as intelligible to the birds which utter as to those which hear them. The rooks and crows have often been observed to hold public meetings of all the individuals in the tribe or colony—male and female (for in their democracy, as well as in that which Mr. John Stuart Mill proposes for England, the mothers as well as the fathers, the paired as well as the unpaired of both sexes have votes)—to debate on matters of importance. As far as we know and can understand the objects of these assemblages, the tribe is summoned to decide whether a sickly bird is so sickly as to be beyond hope of recovery, and therefore to be put out of its misery, they having no doctors among them; whether an interloper from a neighbouring colony has not violently or slyly endeavoured to establish himself among them; or whether he has not committed some other offence against the lex non scripta of their community which calls for reprobation or punishment. At all events, something marvellously like a trial takes place, with a judge or presiding officer, and the whole community for the jurors. The prisoner, looking dejected, penitent, and woebegone, is perched in the middle. A series of caw-cawings ensues, which, as Lord Dundreary might say, "no fellow can understand," but which cannot be otherwise than intelligible to the sachems and members of the corvine tribe—or why should the sounds be uttered?—and which, protracted sometimes for twenty or thirty minutes, or even for an hour, results in a decision of some kind. If the defendant flies away comfortably with the judge and jury at the conclusion of the council, we have a right to suppose that he has been acquitted. If, on the contrary, as often happens, the whole tribe pounce upon him with beak and claw, and peck him to death, screeching and caw-cawing all the while, we must suppose, on the same principle, that he has been found guilty of some crime or other—perhaps of being hopelessly unwell—sentenced to death, and executed accordingly. If there be thought in these matters among the birds, is it not right, even according to the theory of Mr. Max Müller and the other philosophers, to suppose that there is language also? And if a stray rook or crow happened to make its way into the Central Criminal Court while a trial was pending, and perched himself, like Edgar Poe's raven, on the top of a bookcase or the cross-beam of a door, and listened attentively to the pleadings, to the examination of the witnesses, and the judge's charge, without understanding a word that was said, would Mr. Crow or Mr. Rook be justified, if he could get back to his comrades in the woods, in asserting that men had no articulate language?

When sparrows quarrel among themselves on a marital or amorous question, and all the branches of a tree resound with the angry and recriminatory twitterings, do not these sparrows talk? And when swallows assemble, at the close of summer, preparatory to their annual migration to the translucent waters and the ever-green um-

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brageousness of the south, is there no language in the sounds they utter? Do they not deliberate whether the summer be indeed gone in the regions which they still inhabit? Do they not ask one another whether it is still possible to stay a little longer, and be contented with the good things they enjoy? or whether the icy breath of winter is not even now palpable to them, if not to men, creeping and soon to be blowing from afar?—and whether, consequently, it is not expedient for them all to spread their wings and fly away to the bright regions where winter never penetrates? If they do not say these things, they say something—of that there can be little doubt; and because we possess no swallow grammar, and no hirondelle dictionary, are we not a little too wise in our own conceit if we assume that no such language is possible?

If, descending in the scale of creation from the quadrupeds and birds that emit sounds which are perfectly audible to themselves and us — whatever those sounds may mean — to that lower world of insect life which emits little and sometimes no sound that our ears can detect, we may still discover reason to believe that they may have some power of speech — possibly by means of sound, possibly by means of touch and signs. Take bees and ants as familiar examples. When the bees in a hive select one particular bee, and station her at the entrance—like a hall-porter at a club in Pall-Mall — and assign to her the duty, which she well performs, of allowing none but members of the hive to pass in, is it not certain that the functionary has been chosen from out the rest, and informed of the wishes of the community? This cannot be done without a language of some sort, whether of the eye, the touch, or the expression of a sound or series of sounds. When black ants make war against red ants, for the purpose of taking the children of the latter into captivity and making slaves of them, is war declared without preliminary consultation? and, if not, must not these belligerent Formicans have some kind of a language? The battles of the ants have often been seen, and often described. I was one day strolling on the wild but beautiful shore of Loch Eck, in Argyllshire, when I sat me down to rest by the side of a little rill or burnie that trickled down a bank, when I noticed that a large flat stone or slab, that, ages ago, perhaps, had slidden down from the mountains—a slab that was about five or six feet long by about as many wide—was covered with ants of two species—the one with wings, the other wingless—and that they were fighting a desperate battle, a very Waterloo or Sadowa of carnage. The stone was encumbered with the dead and dying; battalion charged battalion, division assailed division, while episodes of individual bravery—one single combatant against another—spotted the battle-field. There were march and countermarch, assault and defence, retreat and pursuit, and, as far as my unpractised eye could judge, a considerable amount of care and attention to the wounded and disabled. Returning home to my books, I found a description in Leigh Hunt's Companion of a similar battle, on the authority of a German naturalist, named Hanhart, and a still more interesting description in Episodes of Insect Life, by Acheta Domestica, both confirmatory of what I had seen, and both containing particulars of the mode of battle, which I had been unable to understand. The puzzle was then, as it still is, whether these quarrelsome little Formicans could form themselves into battalions, arrange plans of attack and defence, appoint commanders and captains, and play the parts of Napoleon and Wellington, without some means of intercommunication of idea, equivalent, in its results, to human speech? The question cannot be decided, except inferentially, and by arguing from the known to the unknown. If treated in this manner, there is much more to be said in favour of the proposition that the Formicans can speak to each other than can be said against it—especially if, remembering, with Shakespeare, that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy, we consider, at the same time, that there may be an infinitude of sounds in nature which our ears are too dull to hear, and of which the vibrations are far too faint and delicate to strike upon the human tympanum.

Without dogmatising on the subject, a student of nature may be permitted to express his belief that the all-wise and infinitely beneficent Creator has not only given to every living creature, great or small, the capacity for enjoyment, and the consequent capacity for pain, but the power of expressing to its own kind its joy or sorrow, its fears, its wishes, and its wants; and that man is not so wholly a monopolist of speech and reason as the philosophers have imagined. One of our popular living poets (Charles Mackay) says, in "A Fancy under the Trees:"

> To everything that lives
> The kind Creator gives
> Share of enjoyment; and while musing here,
> Amid the high grass laid,
> Under your grateful shade,
> I deem your branches, rustling low and clear,
> May have some means of speech
> Lovingly each to each,
> Some power to understand, to wonder, to revere.

Without going to this poetical length in favour of the trees, or even of the flowers, I think it may be fairly argued that the non-existence of speech among animals, and even among insects, is (to use the Scottish law phrase) "not proven." The sun may spread around a very great and glorious radiance, and a candle may emit a very small glimmer; but there is light in both cases. Man's reasoning powers, and the speech that accompanies them, when compared with the reasoning faculty and the speech of all the inferior inhabitants of the globe, may be as greatly in excess of theirs as the noonday sunshine is in excess of the ray of a farthing candle; but the least particle of reasoning power is reason as far as it extends. What we call instinct is but a kind and degree

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of reason, and, in a world full of balances and compensations, its very inferiority has its compensation in the fact that, unlike reason, instinct can never go wrong. If animals cannot understand our language unless in very few instances of ordinary occurrence and when accompanied by sign, gesture, and the expression of the eye, neither can we understand their language, except it have the same mute accompaniments. Though Emerson may says, "that we are wiser than we know," it is barely as possible, with all our undoubted superiority, and all our pride of intellect, that we are not exactly so wise as we think.

TYRANNY.

THEY who bear the weight of tyranny
Must bear it as they may;
But since I've laid my burthen down,
I have a thing to say:

My trouble is past trouble now;
It has long lain with the dead:
My life is in its inner soul
No more disquieted.

I own a lovely garden-ground:
The plants it grows are rare;
And yet sometimes I almost wish
The flowers were not so fair.

Were they thistles by the wayside blown,
I might pluck them and be glad;
But, gazing on these tender things,
Their beauty makes me sad.

Though free as fair in others' sight,
To me they bring the hour
When in my dearth I was denied
The gathering of a flower.

The dearth of love, the dearth of hope—
Life's sweet and common bread,
When the gracious sun seem'd shrunk and lost
In the darkness overhead.

I hear the cruel mandate now;
It shivers through the air,
A blight upon the living flowers
I would were not so fair.

I stretch my hand—yet touch them not;
I cannot well define
How the force of old repression works:
I do not feel them mine.

The breeze may sway, the sun may kiss,
The wind-flower by the wall;
I stand and watch it wistfully
To see it fade and fall.

I lift it then, my own at last,
And hide it in my breast,
And there one dead-born blessing more
Is buried with the rest.

But I forget, in musing thus
On that old distant day,
The word of counsel I would speak,
The "thing I had to say."

It is but this: Oh! ne'er deny
The gifts which Mercy gave,
Lest a voice that is not loud but deep
Should curse you in your grave.

For I believe, as here I breathe,
With every flower downtrod,
The sin and sorrow of that time
Are crying up to God.

HOLIDAY ROMANCE.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

IN FOUR PARTS.

PART I.

INTRODUCTORY ROMANCE. FROM THE PEN OF WILLIAM TINKLING ESQUIRE.*

THIS beginning-part is not made out of anybody's head you know. It's real. You must believe this beginning-part more than what comes after, else you won't understand how what comes after came to be written. You must believe it all, but you must believe this most, please. I am the Editor of it. Bob Redforth (he's my cousin, and shaking the table on purpose) wanted to be the Editor of it, but I said he shouldn't because he couldn't. *He* has no idea of being an Editor.

Nettie Ashford is my Bride. We were married in the right-hand closet in the corner of the dancing-school where first we met, with a ring (a green one) from Wilkingwater's toyshop. *I* owed for it out of my pocket-money. When the rapturous ceremony was over, we all four went up the lane and let off a cannon (brought loaded in Bob Redforth's waistcoat-pocket) to announce our Nuptials. It flew right up when it went off, and turned over. Next day, Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Redforth was united, with similar ceremonies, to Alice Rainbird. This time, the cannon bust with a most terrific explosion, and made a puppy bark.

My peerless Bride was, at the period of which we now treat, in captivity at Miss Grimmer's. Drowvey and Grimmer is the partnership, and opinion is divided which the greatest Beast. The lovely Bride of the Colonel was also immured in the Dungeons of the same establishment. A vow was entered into between the Colonel and myself that we would cut them out on the following Wednesday, when walking two and two.

Under the desperate circumstances of the case, the active brain of the Colonel, combining with his lawless pursuit (he is a Pirate), suggested an attack with fireworks. This however, from motives of humanity, was abandoned as too expensive.

Lightly armed with a paper-knife buttoned up under his jacket, and waving the dreaded black flag at the end of a cane, the Colonel took command of me at 2 P.M. on the eventful and appointed day. He had drawn out the plan of attack on a piece of paper which was rolled up round a hoop-stick. He showed it to me. My position and my full-length portrait (but my real ears don't stick out horizontal) was behind a corner-lamp-post, with written orders to remain there till I should see Miss Drowvey fall. The Drowvey who was to fall was the

* Aged Eight.

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one in spectacles, not the one with the large lavender bonnet. At that signal I was to rush forth, seize my Bride, and fight my way to the lane. There, a junction would be effected between myself and the Colonel, and putting our Brides behind us, between ourselves and the palings, we were to conquer or die.

The enemy appeared—approached. Waving his black flag, the Colonel attacked. Confusion ensued. Anxiously I awaited my signal, but my signal came not. So far from falling, the hated Drowvey in spectacles appeared to me to have muffled the Colonel's head in his outlawed banner, and to be pitching into him with a parasol. The one in the lavender bonnet also performed prodigies of valour with her fists on his back. Seeing that all was for the moment lost, I fought my desperate way hand to hand to the lane. Through taking the back road, I was so fortunate as to meet nobody, and arrived there uninterrupted.

It seemed an age 'ere the Colonel joined me. He had been to the jobbing-tailor's to be sewn up in several places, and attributed our defeat to the refusal of the detested Drowvey to fall. Finding her so obstinate he had said to her in a loud voice, "Die recreant!" but had found her no more open to reason on that point than the other.

My blooming Bride appeared accompanied by the Colonel's Bride, at the Dancing School next day. What? Was her face averted from me? Hah! Even so. With a look of scorn she put into my hand a bit of paper, and took another partner. On the paper was pencilled, "Heavens! Can I write the word! Is my husband a Cow?"

In the first bewilderment of my heated brain I tried to think what slanderer could have traced my family to the ignoble animal mentioned above. Vain were my endeavours. At the end of that dance I whispered the Colonel to come into the cloak-room, and I showed him the note.

"There is a syllable wanting," said he, with a gloomy brow.

"Hah! What syllable?" was my inquiry.

"She asks, Can she write the word? And no; you see she couldn't," said the Colonel, pointing out the passage.

"And the word was?" said I.

"Cow—cow—coward," hissed the Pirate-Colonel in my ear, and gave me back the note.

Feeling that I must for ever tread the earth a branded boy—person I mean—or that I must clear up my honour, I demanded to be tried by a Court-Martial. The Colonel admitted my right to be tried. Some difficulty was found in composing the court, on account of the Emperor of France's aunt refusing to let him come out. He was to be the President. 'Ere yet we had appointed a substitute, he made his escape over the back wall, and stood among us, a free monarch.

The court was held on the grass by the pond. I recognised in a certain Admiral among my judges my deadliest foe. A cocoa-nut had given rise to language that I could not brook. But confiding in my innocence, and also in the knowledge that the President of the United States (who sat next him) owed me a knife, I braced myself for the ordeal.

It was a solemn spectacle, that court. Two executioners with pinafores reversed, led me in. Under the shade of an umbrella, I perceived my Bride, supported by the Bride of the Pirate-Colonel. The President (having reproved a little female ensign for tittering, on a matter of Life and Death) called upon me to plead, "Coward or no Coward, Guilty or not Guilty?" I pleaded in a firm tone, "No Coward and Not Guilty." (The little female ensign being again reproved by the President for misconduct, mutinied, left the court, and threw stones.)

My implacable enemy, the Admiral, conducted the case against me. The Colonel's Bride was called to prove that I had remained behind the corner-lamp-post during the engagement. I might have been spared the anguish of my own Bride's being also made a witness to the same point, but the Admiral knew where to wound me. Be still my soul, no matter. The Colonel was then brought forward with his evidence.

It was for this point that I had saved myself up, as the turning-point of my case. Shaking myself free of my guards—who had no business to hold me, the stupids! unless I was found Guilty—I asked the Colonel what he considered the first duty of a soldier? 'Ere he could reply, the President of the United States rose and informed the court that my foe the Admiral had suggested "Bravery," and that prompting a witness wasn't fair. The President of the Court immediately ordered the Admiral's mouth to be filled with leaves, and tied up with string. I had the satisfaction of seeing the sentence carried into effect, before the proceedings went further.

I then took a paper from my trousers-pocket, and asked: "What do you consider, Colonel Redforth, the first duty of a soldier? Is it obedience?"

"It is," said the Colonel.

"Is that paper—please to look at it—in your hand?"

"It is," said the Colonel.

"Is it a military sketch?"

"It is," said the Colonel.

"Of an engagement?"

"Quite so," said the Colonel.

"Of the late engagement?"

"Of the late engagement."

"Please to describe it, and then hand it to the President of the Court."

From that triumphant moment my sufferings and my dangers were at an end. The court rose up and jumped, on discovering that I had strictly obeyed orders. My foe, the Admiral, who though muzzled was malignant yet, contrived to suggest that I was dishonoured by having quitted the field. But the Colonel himself had done as much, and gave his opinion, upon his word and honour as a Pirate, that when all was lost the field might be quitted without disgrace. I was going to be found "No Coward and Not Guilty," and my blooming Bride was going to be publicly restored to my arms in a procession, when an unlooked-for

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event disturbed the general rejoicing. This was no other than the Emperor of France's aunt catching hold of his hair. The proceedings abruptly terminated, and the court tumultuously dissolved.

It was when the shades of the next evening but one were beginning to fall, 'ere yet the silver beams of Luna touched the earth, that four forms might have been descried slowly advancing towards the weeping willow on the borders of the pond, the now deserted scene of the day before yesterday's agonies and triumphs. On a nearer approach, and by a practised eye, these might have been identified as the forms of the Pirate-Colonel with his Bride, and of the day before yesterday's gallant prisoner with *his* Bride.

On the beauteous faces of the Nymphs, dejection sat enthroned. All four reclined under the willow for some minutes without speaking, till at length the Bride of the Colonel poutingly observed, "It's of no use pretending any more, and we had better give it up."

"Hah!" exclaimed the Pirate. "Pretending?"

"Don't go on like that; you worry me," returned his Bride.

The lovely Bride of Tinkling echoed the incredible declaration. The two warriors exchanged stoney glances.

"If," said the Bride of the Pirate-Colonel, "grown-up people WON'T do what they ought to do, and WILL put us out, what comes of our pretending?"

"We only get into scrapes," said the Bride of Tinkling.

"You know very well," pursued the Colonel's Bride, "that Miss Drowvey wouldn't fall. You complained of it yourself. And you know how disgracefully the court-martial ended. As to our marriage; would my people acknowledge it at home?"

"Or would my people acknowledge ours?" said the Bride of Tinkling.

Again the two warriors exchanged stoney glances.

"If you knocked at the door and claimed me, after you were told to go away," said the Colonel's Bride, "you would only have your hair pulled, or your ears, or your nose."

"If you persisted in ringing at the bell and claiming Me," said the Bride of Tinkling to that gentleman, "you would have things dropped on your head from the window over the handle, or you would be played upon by the garden-engine."

"And at your own homes," resumed the Bride of the Colonel, "it would be just as bad. You would be sent to bed, or something equally undignified. Again: how would you support us?"

The Pirate-Colonel replied, in a courageous voice, "By rapine!" But his Bride retorted, suppose the grown-up people wouldn't be rapined? Then, said the Colonel, they should pay the penalty in Blood. But suppose they should object, retorted his Bride, and wouldn't pay the penalty in Blood or anything else?

A mournful silence ensued.

"Then do you no longer love me, Alice?" asked the Colonel.

"Redforth! I am ever thine," returned his Bride.

"Then do you no longer love me, Nettie?" asked the present writer.

"Tinkling! I am ever thine," returned my Bride.

We all four embraced. Let me not be misunderstood by the giddy. The Colonel embraced his own Bride and I embraced mine. But two times two make four.

"Nettie and I," said Alice, mournfully, "have been considering our position. The grown-up people are too strong for us. They make us ridiculous. Besides, they have changed the times. William Tinkling's baby-brother was christened yesterday. What took place? Was any king present? Answer, William."

I said No, unless disguised as great-uncle Chopper.

"Any queen?"

There had been no queen that I knew of at our house. There might have been one in the kitchen; but I didn't think so, or the servants would have mentioned it.

"Any fairies?"

None that were visible.

"We had an idea among us, I think," said Alice, with a melancholy smile, "we four, that Miss Grimmer would prove to be the wicked fairy, and would come in at the christening with her crutch-stick, and give the child a bad gift? Was there anything of that sort? Answer, William."

I said, that Ma had said afterwards (and so she had), that great-uncle Chopper's gift was a shabby one; but she hadn't said a bad one. She had called it shabby, electrotyped, second-hand, and below his income.

"It must be the grown-up people who have changed all this," said Alice. "*We* couldn't have changed it, if we had been so inclined, and we never should have been. Or perhaps Miss Grimmer *is* a wicked fairy, after all, and won't act up to it, because the grown-up people have persuaded her not to. Either way, they would make us ridiculous if we told them what we expected."

"Tyrants!" muttered the Pirate-Colonel.

"Nay, my Redforth," said Alice, "say not so. Call not names, my Redforth, or they will apply to Pa."

"Let 'em!" said the Colonel. "I don't care! Who's he?"

Tinkling here undertook the perilous task of remonstrating with his lawless friend, who consented to withdraw the moody expressions above quoted.

"What remains for us to do?" Alice went on in her mild wise way. "We must educate, we must pretend in a new manner, we must wait."

The Colonel clenched his teeth—four out in front, and a piece off another, and he had been twice dragged to the door of a dentist-despot, but had escaped from his guards. "How educate? How pretend in a new manner? How wait?"

"Educate the grown-up people," replied Alice. "We part to-night.—Yes, Redforth!"—for the Colonel tucked up his cuffs, "part

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to-night! Let us, in these next Holidays now going to begin, throw our thoughts into something educational for the grown-up people, hinting to them how things ought to be. Let us veil our meaning under a mask of romance; you, I, and Nettie. William Tinkling being the plainest and quickest writer shall copy out. Is it agreed?"

The Colonel answered, sulkily, "I don't mind!" He then asked, "How about pretending?"

"We will pretend," said Alice, "that we are children; not that we are those grown-up people who won't help us out as they ought, and who understand us so badly."

The Colonel, still much dissatisfied, growled, "How about waiting?"

"We will wait," answered little Alice, taking Nettie's hand in hers, and looking up at the sky, "we will wait—ever constant and true—till the times have got so changed as that everything helps us out, and nothing makes us ridiculous, and the fairies have come back. We will wait—ever constant and true—till we are eighty, ninety, or one hundred. And then the fairies will send *us* children, and we will help them out, poor pretty little creatures, if they pretend ever so much."

"So we will, dear," said Nettie Ashford, taking her round the waist with both arms and kissing her. "And now if my Husband will go and buy some cherries for us, I have got some money."

In the friendliest manner I invited the Colonel to go with me; but he so far forgot himself as to acknowledge the invitation by kicking out behind, and then lying down on his stomach on the grass, pulling it up and chewing it. When I came back, however, Alice had nearly brought him out of his vexation, and was soothing him by telling him how soon we should all be ninety.

As we sat under the willow-tree and ate the cherries (fair, for Alice shared them out), we played at being ninety. Nettie complained that she had a bone in her old back and it made her hobble, and Alice sang a song in an old woman's way, but it was very pretty, and we were all merry. At least I don't know about merry exactly, but all comfortable.

There was a most tremendous lot of cherries and Alice always had with her some neat little bag or box or case, to hold things. In it, that night, was a tiny wine-glass. So Alice and Nettie said they would make some cherry-wine to drink our love at parting.

Each of us had a glassful and it was delicious, and each of us drank the toast "Our love at parting." The Colonel drank his wine last, and it got into my head directly that it got into his directly. Anyhow his eyes rolled immediately after he had turned the glass upside down, and he took me on one side and proposed in a hoarse whisper that we should "Cut 'em out still."

"How did he mean?" I asked my lawless friend.

"Cut our Brides out," said the Colonel, "and then cut our way, without going down a single turning, Bang to the Spanish Main!"

We might have tried it, though I didn't think it would answer; only we looked round and saw that there was nothing but moonlight under the willow-tree, and that our pretty pretty wives were gone. We burst out crying. The Colonel gave in second, and came to first; but he gave in strong.

We were ashamed of our red eyes, and hung about for half an hour to whiten them. Likewise a piece of chalk round the rims, I doing the Colonel's, and he mine, but afterwards found in the bedroom looking-glass not natural, besides inflammation. Our conversation turned on being ninety. The Colonel told me he had a pair of boots that wanted soleing and heeling, but he thought it hardly worth while to mention it to his father, as he himself should so soon be ninety, when he thought shoes would be more convenient. The Colonel also told me with his hand upon his hip that he felt himself already getting on in life, and turning rheumatic. And I told him the same. And when they said at our house at supper (they are always bothering about something) that I stooped, I felt so glad!

This is the end of the beginning-part that you were to believe most.

LATEST GHOST-TALK.

The persuasion that the spirits of the departed occasionally revisit the scene of their earthly existence is too general to render necessary any excuse for an occasional return to the subject, whenever the occurrence of some incident of novel feature—or the starting of new theories of explanation—give promise of any profitable result. The object of this paper is not to advocate the doctrine that the revisitings just alluded to *are* permitted, but simply to narrate two or three additions to Ghostly Literature.

Very few years have passed since the occurrence, in a busy thoroughfare of busy London, of an incident which it will be better to give in the words of the narrator.

"It was on a wild stormy night in the spring of 1857, that I was sitting before the fire at my lodgings in —— street, with an open book on my knee. The fire had burned very low, and I had not replenished it; for the weather, stormy as it was, was warm, and one of the windows had remained, since dinner, partially unclosed.

"My sitting-room was on the third floor—one of those queer old rooms that seem expressly adapted to the occupancy of sprites and bogies. The walls were panelled to a height of six feet from the floor, and the cornices covered with fantastic mouldings. Heavy articles of furniture, including a mighty high-backed chair, disposed in different parts of the room, were lighted up occasionally by the flickering gaseous flame in the grate, which soon abandoned them to deeper and deeper darkness as its aliment grew less.

"In the centre of the apartment there stood a large round table. Between this and the fire I sat, as I have mentioned, with a volume on my knee. It was upon the subject of the law of evidence, and, to say truth, showed small

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tokens of frequent consultation. I had lapsed into meditation, and thence into a state of dreamy semi-consciousness, when my attention was attracted by a movement of the door, of which, from my position, I commanded a view. I saw it, through my half-closed eyes, open slowly and noiselessly, and next moment a female figure entered the room.

"It was not a very alarming apparition, being nothing more than an extremely pretty woman of about twenty-five, with light brown hair, gracefully arranged under a bonnet of the ordinary fashion of the day. Her features were perfectly strange to me. They were regular, and she would have been altogether a very attractive person but for the circumstance that her eyes had a strange unearthly expression—a look as of one who had gazed on things immortal—perhaps, to speak more familiarly, a look such as medical science has described as appearing in the eyes of criminals who have been, by some strange accident, torn from the jaws of death after the hangman had, to all appearance, faithfully performed his ghastly office. I myself have seen some similar expression in the faces of men who have endured awful peril, and have been, by some unforeseen circumstance, rescued from destruction when the real bitterness of death had passed.

"So much was I fascinated by that peculiar glance, that I sat, like one entranced, without power of movement, my heart alone reminding me, by its accelerated beat, that I lived, and was cognisant of what was presented to my eyes.

"My mysterious visitor advanced to the table, without taking the least notice of me, and, removing her bonnet with the easy natural manner of one coming home from a walk, laid it on the table. She then took from her pocket a little book bound in crimson velvet, and, drawing a chair to the fire, seemed to become absorbed in its perusal. In sitting down, she turned her side to me; and a gleam from the dying fire suddenly revealed to me a ghastly gaping wound in the right temple, such as might have been caused by a fall against some sharp and hard substance.

"It was now that the conviction rushed upon me that my silent visitor was not of this world; yet I do not remember that I experienced any feeling akin to consternation. Curiosity and interest, at all events, were predominant; and I watched her every movement with almost breathless attention.

"After I know not what time—probably some ten minutes—passed in this manner, the girl seemed to become restless and uneasy. She glanced from her book to the door—to the window—to the mantel-shelf (as though a clock stood there)—tried to resettle to her book, but apparently failed; and, at length, laying it down, murmured to herself: 'What in the world can detain him? It is long past his time.'

"She remained, as it were, buried in thought for a few moments; then, with an audible sigh, resumed her reading. It did not answer, however. It was manifest that she could not control some anxious thought; and now, as if taking a sudden resolution, she replaced the volume in her pocket, rose, put on her bonnet, and moved towards the door. Suddenly she paused, turned, approached the window, and, seeming to raise it, gazed steadfastly out.

"The next moment, she gave a violent start, and appeared to gasp for breath, her clasped hands and straining eyeballs indicating that some terrible object was presented to her view. Then, with one loud, heart-broken cry, she threw her arms wildly above her head, and cast herself from the window!

"That cry seemed to arouse me from my trance-like condition. I was on my feet in a second, and rushed to the window. Had my senses deceived me? No doubt; for it was barely open—as I had left it. I flung up the sash, and leaned forth. In the street all was as usual. The stream of human life passed uninterruptedly on. A collected policeman glanced stolidly up at my opening window, and sauntered by. Two men were calmly smoking at a window fronting mine. It was plain *they* had heard or seen nothing amiss. Much marvelling, I returned to my chair and book; but little enough of the law of evidence found its way, that evening, into my disturbed brain.

"The next day I took an opportunity of speaking confidentially to my landlady. Had anything of an unusual nature been seen in that house before? The worthy woman hesitated. Why did I ask that? I told her all; and, moved by a sudden impulse, inquired if any calamity had occurred in those apartments which might, to some minds, account for the strange appearance I had witnessed.

"With a little pressing, the woman informed me that, just a year before, a tragical incident *had* occurred there. A young couple had occupied the rooms on the third floor. The lady was very pretty, with light brown hair, and was tenderly attached to her young mate, who was a clerk in some one of the large city offices.

"One day she returned from her walk as usual, and, fearing she was late, ran hastily up, half expecting to find her husband awaiting her. He had not arrived, however; and, having thrown aside her bonnet, and set the room in order, she sat down beside the fire, and strove to forget her impatience in the perusal of a book which George had that day presented to her. Dinner-time came, and tea-time, but no George. Dreading she knew not what, the poor girl at last ran to the window, determined to keep watch until he arrived. For some time she had been noticed leaning motionless over the window-sill. But a new object attracted the attention of those who watched her. A stretcher was borne up the street, upon which lay a crushed, distorted corpse. It was the young husband. He had fallen from a steamer's deck, and been crushed and drowned between the boat and pier. As they halted at the door which he had quitted in health and mirth that morning, a piercing shriek alarmed the whole street. The young widow had flung herself from the window. Her head struck the kerb-stone. She was killed on the spot."

A ghostly appearance, under similar condi-

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tions, was witnessed by the aunt of a lady now resident in London, who was at the time on a visit to Canada. She was about fifteen, healthy in body and in mind, and gifted with a remarkably clear intelligence. While sitting, in broad day, beneath a cherry-tree whose branches overhung a paling at right angles to her seat, she saw a young girl come tripping along the paling. In wondering how she was enabled to keep her footing, the lady noticed that her tiny feet were encased in high-heeled red morocco slippers. Her dress was of old fashion, consisting partly of the then obsolete "négligé" and a long blue scarf. Arrived beneath the tree, the visionary figure unwound the scarf, secured one end to an overhanging bough, made a loop at the other, and, slipping it over her head, leaped from the paling! On witnessing this, the young seer fainted away.

Subsequent inquiry proved that, at a period not less than sixty years before, a girl named Caroline Waldstein, daughter of a former proprietor of the estate, having been jilted by her lover, put an end to her life at the spot and in the manner depicted in the vision.

Instances of the warning dream, involving minute particulars, possess a certain interest. Here is a recent example:

The father of a friend of the writer, an old Peninsular officer—he commanded his regiment at Waterloo—was residing, not long since, about twelve miles from London, in a direction where, strange to say, no railway passed sufficiently near to materially accelerate the journey to town. One morning the colonel found, among the letters awaiting him on the breakfast-table, an application from a friend of his, who was engaged in some business of a fluctuating and speculative character, earnestly requesting the loan of a hundred pounds. The writer resided in Wimpole-street, where the Colonel had often partaken of his friend's hospitality. Unwilling to refuse such an appeal, he instantly transmitted, by post, a cheque for the required amount.

On the succeeding night, his eldest daughter dreamed that the applicant had sustained a reverse of so crippling a nature, that insolvency was inevitable, and her father's money consequently lost. So deep was the impression thus unexpectedly suggested to her mind, that the young lady left her bed, and, going straight to her mother's room, communicated her dream. Her sleepy parent merely remonstrated, and sent her away. But a second time came back the disturbing dream, and with an angry force that sent her a second time to her mother's bedside. Once more—but with soothing and gentleness—Miss Margaret was dismissed to her repose. However, about four in the morning, the dream recurred for the *third* time, and now the young lady fairly got up, dressed herself, and appealed to her father, declaring that she would not attempt to sleep again, until the truth of what she now believed to be a warning should be investigated. The colonel's interest and curiosity were aroused. He ordered his carriage at half-past six, and, taking his daughter with him, started for Wimpole-street.

The travellers knew the habits of their friend. He never quitted his bedroom till nine o'clock, and when, a little before that hour, they were ushered into his breakfast-parlour, the morning's letters lay beside his plate. Among them, the colonel recognised his own, which, under the peculiar circumstances, and the pressing instances of his daughter, the gallant officer felt justified in abstracting, and placing in his pocket. Upon the appearance of the master of the house, the visitor explained, and with perfect truth, that he had come thus early to town, purposely to express his very sincere regret that circumstances, equally uncontrollable and unforeseen, rendered it impossible for him to comply with his request for a loan.

How these excuses were received history does not state. One thing, however, is beyond all question, that the gentleman's name appeared in the next Gazette, and *that* owing to liabilities in regard to which the poor colonel's loan would have been as a drop in a well! Who will deny that here was a dream fairly worth a hundred pounds?

It may be satisfactory to the lovers of unexplained marvels to learn that the number of houses wanting flesh-and-blood tenants, because they are supposed to be preoccupied by beings of a different mould, by no means diminishes. There is a spot—a very pretty spot, too—and highly accessible to travellers, in which there is a very colony of such dwellings (to use the language of an inhabitant of the district, a "perfect nest of ghosts), albeit its name, to satisfy editorial scruples, must be suppressed. It might else have been discovered, with consummate ease, in the page of Bradshaw. A brief residence in that favoured precinct would satisfy the most incredulous that there are mysteries that baffle his philosophy. There is another spot—let us hope that we are successfully working to windward of the law of defamation, in mentioning that it is not far from the city of Bath—which boasts of two handsome country-seats, each possessed of a traditionary ghost. The following, relating to one of these houses, which we shall designate Barton Hall, is perfectly true, and occurred but a short time since, on the occasion of the visit of two young ladies, sisters, from whom the narrative is derived. They had retired to the chamber occupied by both, and the elder sister was already in bed. The younger was kneeling before the fire. The door opened softly, and a woman, entering, crossed the apartment, and bent down before a chest of drawers, as if intending to open the lower one. Thinking it was one of the maids, the young lady who was in bed accosted her: "Is that *you*, Mary? What are you looking for there?"

Her sister, who was beside the fire, had risen to her feet, and turned towards the woman. In the act, she uttered a loud shriek, and, staggering back, fell half fainting on the bed. The other sprang up, and followed the intruder, who seemed to retreat quickly into an adjoining dressing-room. The young lady entered. It was empty.

Returning to her sister, the latter, who had recovered from her consternation, explained the

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cause of her outcry. The woman, in turning to meet her, displayed a human countenance, but devoid of eyes.

The neighbouring residence, Jervis House, is a building some two centuries old, and stands in rather extensive grounds, having, moreover, a large ornamental lake, in the centre of which is a small island, without trees. A gentleman who was on a visit for the first time at Jervis House, a year or two ago, observed to his host at breakfast: "I see there is no bridge-communication with your little island."

"None."

"I thought, too, you told me you had at present no boat on the lake?"

"Nor have I," replied his friend. "Why?"

"How then do ladies effect the passage?"

The host hesitated.

"Ladies!" he repeated. "Do you mean——"

"I mean, my good friend, that I noticed a lady walking on the island, this morning, so early, that I wondered at her fancy. She passed entirely round, and crossed it twice, so that I could not possibly be mistaken."

"You have seen the Jervis ghost," said his friend, curtly. And the subject was dismissed.

The following has been authenticated: Mr. L. L., one of the best and boldest members of the famous Midlandshire hunt, was killed by his horse falling with him at a leap. He left a widow and one daughter, a very lovely girl. Mr. L.'s estate, however, passed to a male heir—a distant cousin—and Mrs. L. and her daughter determined to take up their abode on the Continent.

After a short sojourn at Paris, they proceeded to Tours, travelling, from preference, by the posting-road, until, one evening, the picturesque aspect of a little hamlet, overlooked by a fine old château, induced them to halt there for the night. They were informed by the landlord of the rustic inn, that the grey-walled mansion, to the south, was the property of Monsieur Gaspard, a widower, who desired to dispose of it, and, meanwhile, resided about a league from the house. Next morning, Mrs. L. and her daughter passed some hours exploring the venerable mansion, and roaming in its noble but neglected gardens, until they arrived at the conclusion that nothing could possibly please them better. A proposal was forthwith addressed to the proprietor. No difficulties ensued—and the ladies were quickly installed in their new possession—as well as, it would seem, in the good graces of Monsieur Gaspard himself, for he paid them frequent visits, and speedily established himself on the footing of an intimate friend.

He was a man of more than ordinary talents, having moreover the art to turn them to advantage, and it was not very long before Monsieur Gaspard became the declared suitor of Ada L.

One peculiarity he possessed, which had soon attracted Mrs. L.'s notice—a liability to sudden fits of gloom and abstraction, against which he manifestly strove in vain. These, however, it is true, were not of frequent occurrence; and, with this single exception, all went merrily as that marriage-bell which, in about a fortnight, was to celebrate the union of the affianced pair. For Monsieur Gaspard was an ardent lover, and gave his mistress no peace until he had secured an early day. One night Ada, fatigued with a walk somewhat longer than common, withdrew early to her chamber, a lofty, spacious apartment, with furniture of oak and ebony, and having a large old wardrobe directly facing the bed. She was awakened by sounds like the rustling of a silk dress; and, to her amazement, saw a young lady, richly attired in the fashion of a past period, cross the room, and disappear, as it seemed, into the closed wardrobe.

The vision had passed so suddenly, that the young lady had no difficulty in persuading herself that it was nothing more than a dream, or one of those impressions, so real in appearance, that frequently visit us on the confines of actual sleep. When, however, on the next night, a precisely similar incident recurred, and, still more, when the third night presented the same image, Miss L.'s alarm and dismay were fully aroused. On this last occasion she had taken her maid to sleep with her, and it was the loud scream of the latter that awakened her, in time to notice the retreating figure.

Cautioning the servant to be silent on the matter, Miss L. communicated the circumstance to her mother. Workmen were sent for to examine and remove the wardrobe, when, at the back, was found a small door. This, being forced open, revealed a narrow flight of stairs, which conducted the searchers to a little vault-like chamber. In one corner lay a heap of moth-eaten clothes, and other objects, which a nearer scrutiny proved to be the remains of a human being, of which little more than the skeleton was left. A ring and a locket were also found, and these, at the police inquiry which succeeded, tended to the identification of the remains as those of a beautiful girl of the village, who, five years before, had, as it was supposed, quitted her home with a young soldier who had been seen in the neighbourhood.

Monsieur Gaspard was placed under surveillance; but even this cautious step sufficed. His conscience had long tormented him. He acknowledged that he had seduced and murdered the girl; but under what precise circumstances was never revealed, except to his confessor. He was found guilty, but not executed—passing the remainder of his miserable life in the condition, worse than death, of a prisoner in the galleys, without hope of pardon.

THE DEAR GIRL.

By the Author of "Bella Donna," "Never Forgotten," &c.

CHAPTER XXXIII. ENMITY.

In a place like the colony, small figures and small offices would magnify into a surprising importance. The affair of the unhappy Doctor Macan, and his rivalry with, or rather defeat by, the new and more popular doctor, was, to use Captain Filby's favourite expression, "as good as a play." That last unhappy practitioner wa every day falling; he soon "wouldn't have breas

and cheese for his brats." While Vivian is away, we may go back a little.

The rise of Dr. White was curious. He had come there in an obscure way, which should not certainly be remarked on, as so many chose that fashion of coming. A few had noticed him. He was good looking, and had a good address. The two or three who had spoken to him never knew that he belonged to the profession, until one day Lady Pilpay, going on to Paris, and taken with the vapours or the remains of sea-sickness at the "Royle," Le Bœuf went off himself, distractedly, to fetch Dr. Macan. It was late in the evening, and that unhappy man, at that unhappy hour, was actually sitting with a newly married compatriot, who had money, over some rich and real Irish native spirit. Such a treat he had not had for years. Its delicious fumes brought him back to the old country, and the sweet "county Cark," and to Dr. Brennan's "beyan't Blarney." There were two tumblers, then three, then four; and then the messenger from his own house, sent in by the agitated "missus," surprised him.

"Faith, and I've no notion of stirring, tell her," said the doctor. "Not I!"

"Bring a little phial with you, Mary darling," said his friend, comically, "and we'll fill it for her ladyship. It's the best medicine she could take."

Le Bœuf posted away to a well-known café, where he knew he was certain of meeting the French doctors, though, indeed, he knew he was committing a blunder. Still, the Frenchman would prescribe *rest*—rest at the Hôtel Royal. Just as he reached the café, he was touched on the arm.

"I hear you were looking for the English doctor," said a young man of good address, "and that you could not find him. I am in the profession, and if I could be of use——"

Le Bœuf looked at him. He was well dressed, though a little hungry-looking, and had a good manner.

"I have only been here a short time," said the young man, answering an objection he saw in the other's face.

Le Bœuf said it would do, and took him off. The hungry look still struck him, and, as he entered the hotel, he turned and said:

"She is not very ill. I think all she wants is to repose herself for a few days."

"Thank you for the hint," said the other. "Often unprofessional people see more of the *real* nature of a malady than some of us."

He was introduced to Lady Pilpay's room—a fat dowager, with a companion, and a corpulent testy King Charles spaniel—that breed was then in fashion, and considered in the haute école of canine fancy—slumbering in an arm-chair. Her ladyship herself was lying on the sofa. She was pleased with the look of the young man. In Ferbelow's mart, at home, she liked to be served by good-looking young men, and often said to some of the young ladies of that house, "Go away, child; I am tired of your awkward fingers. Tell them to send me Mr. Jackson." And Mr. Jackson—a young gentleman with pale whiskers—would come bowing, and roll out his silks and ribbons in perfect billows, and was pleasantly rallied by his friends on this marked preference. She was delighted with the skill of the new Dieppe doctor. He spoke so softly, and, when he had mastered her case, was so agreeable and pleasant in his remedies. It was curious that he should have been the only one that really hit off her complaint—that is, agreed with her in what she believed to be her complaint. His prescription was rest, perfect rest, for a few days.

"Yours is a precious life, Lady Pilpay; and you must not do too much."

This was very different from "that brute," Duncan Dennison, who had told her, roughly, "There's nothing the matter with you, ma'am, but too much good beef. A good breathing walk every morning is the physic for you." Then Dr. White noticed that the snappish little King Charles, buried in his arm-chair, was very delicate, and interested himself about him, and promised to send him a soothing powder, later. He and Lady Pilpay were nearly three weeks at the Royal. By three weeks—nay, in three hours—he was a famous and fashionable doctor in Dieppe, a very agreeable young man, whom Lady Pilpay—then the only lady of quality in the place—thought more "clever" than Sir Duncan Dennison. Her seal was set upon the young doctor, and passed him current. Poor Dr. Macan!—that was a costly tumbler of punch for him.

It was long told, as a proof of the disinterested and handsome behaviour of the young man that he had actually "insisted on calling in Macan" in consultation. *He* was the chief local practitioner. It was only common courtesy, he said; and it was not fair in him as a new comer. Macan came, breathing hard and hastily; but Lady Pilpay, the moment almost she saw him, took an aversion to him. Here again ill luck pursued him; for, in his conflict of emotions, he did not see the King Charles on the rug, and stumbled over that over-fed brute, who shrieked and snarled with pain and pettishness.

"A low whisky-drinking fellow, with no manners! Throw the windows open, Jane."

Le Bœuf, too, was not ungrateful. A word from him went a long way; and, by the time Lady Pilpay had to proceed on her journey, Doctor White's reputation was made. Was it wonderful, then, that Colonel Vivian, the splendid—when that illness produced by his heroic deed came on—should be attended by this agreeable man, now, indeed, enjoying large practice? He attended Mrs. Guernsey Beaufort; Dick, the consul; Mrs. Penny, the English clergyman's wife, in her confinement: for in this department, too, he was not unskilful; and though the "little cherub"—Mrs. Penny's daughter—was taken from them, nothing reflected on the accoucheur, poor Penny's house being, to use Captain Filby's phrase, "like a dozen rabbit-warrens." He came twice every day to Colonel Vivian's bedside. Vivian did not like him. The origin of this dislike—which became a scandal in the colony—we must now trace.

"He is quite harmless, I believe," he said, laughing, to Lucy; "and he seems to be very unsettled in his principles of medicine."

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"Oh, but he is so clever, you know," said Lucy, with reverence. "And he has cured that old Lady Pilpay!"

"I don't know," said Vivian, "but he agrees with everything I say. I said, yesterday, I should like a glass of good Burgundy, and would give the world for it. 'Well,' he said, 'Colonel Vivian'—and he is always ringing my name and title in a most disagreeable way—'well, Colonel Vivian, I don't know but that you are right.' When he had gone away, I remembered that he had said a few days ago that wine would be 'like prussic acid for me.'"

"Ah, yes," said the dear girl, eagerly. "Don't you see? That is the new system—whatever the patient likes or wishes for. He explained it all to us. 'That is nature,' he says, 'crying out.' Oh, he is very, very clever." Vivian laughed long, and loud, and merrily.

"'But,' I said, 'if nature keeps crying out for opposite things?' That poor Macan—I suspect he knows more——"

"Yes," said Lucy, hesitating; "only he is so—so fond of punch. Now, if he came here some day in *that* state, and made a mistake about medicine, oh, I should never forgive myself!"

Vivian looked at her with inexpressible interest and fondness. She was colouring.

"Very well," he said, "that's settled. We shan't have him. Though, indeed, if a mistake were made with me——" and he sighed.

"Sighing and low-spirited," said she, eagerly. "Now you mustn't give up to this; you promised me."

They talked of a hundred things. Delightful mornings, these, for Lucy. Charming hours! It was like playing sweet music. These were the old hours she looked back to. "And you like them," she went on, speaking of Madame Jaques. "Such a dear pair! I am so interested in them. And yet I am afraid, do you know," she added in her wistfully confidential way, which was one of her charms, "they are not doing so well. It is a dreadful place. And their landlord is very rapacious, you know."

"Then their tenant must make it up to them," said he, delighted to please her. "I am really getting ashamed to be living at such a small charge. Next week, positively, I shall raise the rent on myself. By the way, their maid Nanon, I am not pleased with *her*. Perhaps I do her wrong; but somehow I have my strong suspicions."

"Of what?" said Lucy, showing in her face she was shocked.

"Oh, it is nothing; a few fancies, perhaps, now and again. But she is always hanging about after my papers, and, I *think*, a sort of ally of that dreadful doctor, whom I wish I was rid of—I do indeed!"

Some thought that came into his mind, suggested by his papers, agitated him dreadfully. He had risen, and was walking about. "You should not be here; nor come in to me in this way. It was foolish, cruel, wicked of me to suffer it! You, Miss Dacres, *you* cannot understand. You are fresh from a school, how can you ask me to stay on in this place? I, a soldier, and with duties to look to—I have no business with things of this sort. I am well enough, and strong enough, to go away; and if I had the heart of a man, I should fly by to-night's packet."

Poor Lucy was aghast at this burst. She rose from her seat.

"Sit down for a minute longer," he said, seizing her hand.

"What can you have to say?" said Lucy, growing agitated. "Oh, indeed, I oughtn't to stay."

"What I have to say?" repeated he. "What I *must* tell you now, no matter at what cost—that you are, indeed, the dear girl, the *dearest*——"

Lucy saw him sinking down almost to her feet. She was pale, fluttering, agitated; she knew not what was coming, yet she made no protest. It seemed to her, afterwards, that that moment verged on paradise. But a sudden sound at the door, not, strange to say, as of its being opened, but as of its being closed, broke the dream, and startled both. Next moment they heard a tap; the next, Dr. White entered.

One afternoon, a short time after, Mr. Vivian, now grown quite strong, was going to the pier to meet The Dear Girl, as a little surprise. He had gone away a street or two, when he found he had forgotten something, and returned. Madame Jaques was at the back, in the garden, with her maid, and did not see him come in. His bedroom opened off his sitting-room, and inside the bedroom was a little cupboard where he kept some of his "things." He was looking about softly here, with the doors open, and found what he wanted, when he saw some one in the sitting-room, stooping down over the table, and reading. Looking again, and still making no noise, he saw now that it was Doctor White.

There was a start and clatter as of shutting down lids, and the doctor's pale face was fixed on him, and the doctor's trembling fingers were on a little desk of Vivian's, not having time to get away. Vivian saw it all now. He remained a moment looking at him from head to foot.

"This is charming work," said Vivian at last. "Fortunate I came in time. Leave the room, sir—leave the house—never dare to enter it again!"

"Take care that I do not expose you. It is my duty to put honest people on their guard."

The other turned on him quickly. The former obsequious humble insinuation had all gone. Instead, there was a dark wicked-looking man.

"Then *you* had better take care. I give you a plain warning. I am not to be trifled with, nor my character either. So be very cautious. I tell you, you are mistaken in what you think. I am curious in little cabinets—there seems something curious in that lock."

Vivian laughed scornfully.

"This is like the impudence of a thief in the dock."

"No matter what it is like," said the other, taking his hat. "Keep my caution in mind. Otherwise, take care. Any man who calumniates me, I know how to calumniate him, and hope to do it better too." He left Vivian in a rage.

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CHAPTER XXXIV. DESERTION.

The grand mystery was, the next day she thought, laid open to Lucy.

A bright face appeared at her door. It was the face of Madame Jaques, radiant and joyous. She almost rushed in; for they felt to each other like two girls.

"Joy! joy!" she cried. "Such news, mademoiselle! He is indeed a hero! I have found it all out. Ah, the beau garçon! *There is another*, mademoiselle, do you not see? He is bound—bound by his word, bound in honour. *There* is the struggle! He goes pacing, pacing, pacing up and down his room, like the caged lion at the fair."

"Ah!" cried Lucy. The light had poured in on her gradually.

"Yes, Jaques says so. I say so. Any one that knows anything of these things must say so. A marriage of convenience — his father and mother force him."

"He has no father nor mother," said Lucy, gently taking the lights out of the picture.

"The young lady idolises him; that is only natural, and no fault of hers. He is a man of honour." Madame Jaques drew herself up, as she had seen the ladies on the stage do. "He respects his word. He has long since ceased to care for her. He now idolises another."

This sketch brought conviction home to Lucy. It was too clear; it explained everything. All that he had done became not only excusable, but natural, and what he *should* have done.

These were happy days for Lucy. An unbounded prospect seemed opening out before her of happiness and joy; something elysian seemed to be drawing on. There was a gentleness, an interest, about her lover, an anticipation she could not describe; and all day long she felt she could sing. For the next, a little plan had been fixed. There was a small town about ten miles away, where there were some curious things to be seen—a church—it did not matter what; it was an expedition. She and dear Harco, and perhaps the dearer Vivian, were to walk there, and drive back again. These sort of plans gave her surprising pleasure. Shall it be confessed, also, she was anxious to show the tattling public of the place that she did not care—no, not one *bit*—for their vile uncharitable stories!

Harco was in great spirits that night; for he had his joyful news also. A letter was in his hand; who shall we suppose was it from? Sir John Trotter, the strange baronet. It expressed great surprise at not having heard from him, as he was "still keeping the borough open." ("What did I tell you, Lulu? I knew the fellow would knuckle down to me!") "It was surely worth while making a small exertion for so important a matter," Sir John then went on, dwelling on this point; adding, "I often wish to have the pleasure of hearing 'Charlie is my darling' once more. I never heard it given with such incomparable spirit."

"He was a good judge of music," said Harco, reflectively; "I must allow him that. Indeed, I must say he has behaved handsomely. For between ourselves, Lulu, I let my tongue fly a little——"

"He is noble, dearest," said Lucy, with enthusiasm. "Oh, and we shall see you sitting in the house, a real M.P.!"

"Hearing me, too, my pet. Seeing would be poor stuff. I'll astonish them, the right honourable gentlemen on my right. And I'll be giving orders for the gallery to my Lulu and her colonel—eh, rogue?"

Lulu coloured, not with confusion, but with pleasure. She saw the vision of a happy party driving down to the house—Harco going in at the members' entrance, she and her dear Vivian at their own proper door. Suddenly Harco called out, with one of those odd changes of tone so common to him, now grown surly:

"What the deuce is all this? 'I expected, at least, to have heard from your friend, who explained to me how things were, and how you were situated. He said I was to hear from him in a week. This delay is very strange, and I hope will be explained. Business, however, will take me to France, shortly, and I shall look in at Dieppe on my way.' What the deuce—what does he mean? I've no friend."

Lucy gravely took it from him, and read it over to herself, then returned it to him, her eyes flashing, her lips trembling. "I know it," she said, "and can explain it. It was Mr. West."

"Phe—e—e—w—" went on Mr. Dacres in an interminable whistle. "*That's* the way! so it is."

"And do you not see, Harco? Oh! how mean, how pitiful! Don't you see, this *was his revenge*, when he found that I would not accept him? How unworthy! He tries to poison our friends, and set them against us. I could not have believed it of him! No!"

"He's a mean, plotting, low fellow!" said Harco, with sudden savageness. "I'll go to him, and tell him so, too. What does he mean, meddling with me?"

"No, you mustn't," said Lucy, firmly; "we will treat him with contempt. Or, I tell you what, let us send out for Vivian, and tell him. I have a little secret, Harco. *He* knows Sir John; but I did not like telling you, as it was all at an end."

"Well, well," said Harco, "that West—the viper—he beats anything. Yes, let's have over the dear colonel."

Lulu ran off to her room. Mr. Dacres, winking to himself, which he often did, got his hat and tripped off.

"I'll give him a hearing this very moment," he said. "The old ascetic! my old Mount Tabor, indeed! nice monk of the desert. Confound his impudence!"

He set off, and repaired to the Place, where West's rooms were, and in his jovial and "light-of-her-eyes" style accosted "the little maid" that opened the door. "I want to see the master, my dear. Tell him I'm below'.'

The girl shook her head, and said, "He is not well at all, sir, I fear, and can see no one."

"Oh, I know, I know. He'll see me, never fear. Shall I go up to his room?"

"Impossible, sir," she said. "He is not up even. Indeed, sir, you can't."

"Well, tell his sister, Miss Margaret."

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"No, monsieur; you can't see any of them."

"Oh, this won't do at all," said Harco, raising his voice so as to be heard. "This hiding and holing won't answer. I'm not to be put off in this style." Suddenly a door opened, and he saw West's figure before him—the pale face, but the fiery eyes.

"Come in here," he said, with an air of authority. "I am not well, and see nobody; but I heard what you said. What is it you want?"

"Why, I want this," said Harco, with some bluster. "I came to speak about a piece of your behaviour, Mr. West, which, I must take the liberty of telling you, I think devilish unhandsome, and shabby too." West stepped back.

"I am not in the humour for this sort of thing," he said, impatiently. "You must go away—to the café—anywhere, if this is all you have come for."

Harco coloured. "What do you mean?" he said. What's the meaning of this, sir? Look at that. Here's Trotter writing over that he saw you, and gave you messages for me, which you have suppressed and cushioned. Yes, sir, and from what I call mean and unworthy motives, which we all know. Now explain it, if you can."

"I explain nothing. Make what you like of the transaction."

"Oh, come, come," said Mr. Dacres, losing his temper, "this won't do at all. You must explain—or, by the Lord, sir, as sure as I stand here, I'll go over this whole place and *post* you."

"Do it, then, as speedily as you can," said Mr. West, coldly. "Then you will find that I know how to deal with you. You must leave this house *now*."

"Then let me tell you," said Mr. Dacres, "that your plot has failed. I am astonished at any one, with the heart of a man, trying to strike at a poor girl through her father! But there are others to help her and me. Colonel Vivian, sir, is a gentleman and a man of honour. He has taken this Trotter matter in hand."

A curious expression came into West's face.

"Then I hope he will be able to help you."

And Mr. West abruptly retired, leaving Harco utterly confounded at the fellow's assurance. "I'll match my fine hermit yet." He turned to the maid who was standing there: "Miss West, please!"

"She has gone away."

"Let me see. Gone away! When? where?"

"To Paris, I believe, sir," said the girl, looking round.

"To Paris?" repeated Mr. Dacres, really and not theatrically astonished. "Oh, I must see about this." He was going past her, when the figure of Constance appeared on the stairs. She spoke to him coldly, but firmly. Dacres never relished her.

"Mr. West has passed a very bad night," she said. "Do, please, go away."

"Oh, of course, of course," he said. "Here's news, though! So Miss Margaret West has taken a trip for herself. Has she gone off with any one?"

"I can tell you nothing," said Constance, in the same icy tone. "You can want nothing with her." He went away, utterly mystified.

"But I'll not be humbugged," he said, working himself into a rage, "by him, or any like him! I mind the day when I made Coulter eat his words in the bar-room, Q. C. and all! And my Jack over there won't escape. I'll have him out on the sands as soon as look at him."

When he got home, he met the pretty Madame Jaques, who had herself come over with a note for Miss Lucy. Mr. Dacres, in good spirits at his last resolve, had met her on the stairs, and received her with the gallantry which he always kept for what he called a fine woman. He could have sung the "Light of her eye, that mirrors the skies," over her, and called her his "jolie Marie," which did not at all offend her.

"And how is our handsome colonel?" he said, gaily, after these compliments. "But what's up, my dear?"

"O mon Dieu, did you not hear, sir? He is gone away to-night."

"*Gone away!*" he repeated, in genuine amazement and anger. "What the deuce do you mean, woman?"

"He went by the diligence. He was obliged to go. He will return, he says, soon."

"Return, he says. Here's a business. The scoundrel! I'll be after him, and drag him back by the neck, the mean hound! Here, Lucy, child, come out here." And, without ceremony, he tore open her letter and read:

"Dearest Lucy. What will you think of me! At half an hour's notice, I have to leave this for Paris. But I shall be back in a week at furthest. What I go for has something to do with our happiness, and may help to smooth away all difficulties. I shall count the hours till I see you again. Darling, take care of yourself, and don't be disquieted.

"Yours, VIVIAN."

CHAPTER XXXV. A BALL.

DISMAL evening! most mournful of nights! For Mr. Dacres, having found that his resources would not admit of his taking a chaise at Sody's to overtake the diligence, and "bring the blackguard back by the crop," had sunk into a moody state, and over some of the poor liquor of the country poured out grumblings and frantic threats commingled.

Poor Lucy made a better show; but there was a wistfulness in her face, and an eagerness in her eye, which the skilful understood and enjoyed. Still, she had hard trials at home, and the ill-humour and at times fury of the brilliant and genial Dacres were spent upon her lavishly.

The most curious change in him was a recurrence to Mr. West. "It served you right. There you had a sensible steady man, that loved you, and would have cherished you all his life long. A man of substance, too. None of your skipjacks, that are here to-day and gone in a moment. I told you how it would be. I warned you at the time, but I am never attended to." Latterly, too, Dacres had been a good deal harassed for money, and privately determined that

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he would try and bring matters round with West. There had been a foolish misunderstanding; no doubt there had been faults on both sides; and, without a word to Lucy, determined to repair forthwith to Mr. West's. "It is a scandal the way we have neglected him. No wonder he's sulky; and that chit of mine is as skittish as a lamb. I'll patch it up with a little soothering. Harco, my boy, you've brought round a more hostile jury than that!"

These were sore trials for our Lucy; but she had hope, and was confident, and, though no letter had reached her, she was sure Vivian would return to her. She felt something like a pang when she heard of Mr. West's illness, something like sudden feeling that she had to do with this. Her gentle heart was inexpressibly touched with the picture of the lonely infatuated man, whose life seemed like exercise in a prison. What if she had been unkind, ungrateful? After all, his crime and his enmity came of loving her. She went to her father, as he came in, and putting her face up wistfully to his, said:

"I think, Harco, we should go and ask after that poor Mr. West."

Mr. Dacres freed himself a little impatiently. He was worried, and not in the humour for affection or endearment.

"Oh, he's well enough. He'll do well. He has a nice aide-de-camp there to take care of him. His precious sister is off—off to Paris, it seems."

"Off to Paris!" she repeated in wonder and alarm. "Then she is gone after *him!* Oh, papa, papa, she will do him some harm. I *wish* he was back with us again."

At any sacrifice, she must appear at the Guernsey Beauforts' ball, wear a show of happiness there, be watched closely by malicious eyes—in short, go through that dismal probation, a pardonable Spartan bit of acting—one of the sorest trials which fashion imposes.

The room in the établissement had been exquisitely decorated. Lenôtre, a famous gardener from Hâvre, had come over and superintended the flowers. The mayor had lent shrubs, in square tubs, from his grounds. The outside of the building was hung with variegated lamps. The whole town—the fishermen even—gathered in crowds to see the company arrive. Mounted gendarmes were on duty. The orchestra, reinforced also from Hâvre, was in the gallery. The supper was undertaken by "Le Buff," of the Royal. The decorations and upholstering were under the charge of the local "furnisher." It would be a superb ceremonial, and long remembered in the place.

By ten o'clock the guests were arriving. They were received in person by Mr. Beaufort himself and Mrs. Beaufort, that lady looking very worn, and having an air of fright in her face. She was sumptuously dressed. Mr. Beaufort was unusually gracious and voluble, all smiles and talk. Even Captain Filby, in a blue coat and gilt buttons and a puce-coloured under waistcoat, as he looked round, was a little confounded, and seemed to think those ruthless stories, which he had circulated so piteously, had been more or less logically confuted. Here was the maire, in full official dress, and the maire's lady, bowing and bending; here was the juge de paix, the English consul, and the English clergyman. They all flocked in. And here, a little after, came Mr. Harcourt Dacres and his daughter. Any "taste of divarshion" made him forget everything, even, as he said, "if he was to be arrested the next hour." So he was all beaming smiles and ready wit.

A hundred eyes followed Lucy as she walked, leaning on the gay Dacres's arm, charmingly dressed, fresh as a rose-bud, but very nervous and sad at heart. What malicious eyes! what more malicious mouths, on which rested a meaning smile, and between which fluttered the scarcely whispered sentences: "I always said it would come to that;" "He got out of it, sir, and deserted her;" "Don't you see she's trying to bear up? She comes here to show she doesn't feel it. It won't do—won't do, ma'am!" Need we say that this was Captain Filby's remark?

Mr. Blacker, too, was introducing, marshalling, pushing his way, making sudden swoops right through the room, riding roughshod over every obstacle, to seize on some gentleman or lady, whispering some agitated message. For one person he was looking very eagerly—Mr. Morton, and his friend, Mr. Parkes, "son, you know, of one of our English judges." Shading his eyes, peering down the room, rushing on these sudden expresses at surprised strangers who resembled his missing friends, Mr. Blacker was not a little disturbed. Suddenly a letter was brought to him, which he read with as much importance as if he was on horseback commanding an army in a battle.

"Bless me, where are they? Why don't they come in?"

But the charming Wilkinson was not there—neither that bewitching lady nor her husband. It had not yet got abroad that there had been a scene the day before, a reconciliation and making up, and determination to return home to their dear old England, which they said they wished they had never left. The packet, which sailed according to the tide, left that night at one o'clock, and they would get away privately by it from this wretched place, into which they wished they had never come. Yet there would, of course, come a time when they would look back to their gay life there, and quote incidents to their dull agricultural friends; and it is to be feared the bewitching Wilkinson often thought, not with displeasure, of the seductive Ernest Beaufort.

To Lucy, the sight of this gay scene, the lights, the flowers, the music, and the bright company, only made her more dispirited. Her little heart was heavy; she would not dance, though she was glad to see her dear Harco in such spirits, and his figure all but "capering," as he said, afar off. Somehow, before her was a faint hope that, before the brilliant night was over, something might come about. And to this door, where so many were coming in, her eyes were always wandering. Suddenly, to her astonishment, they fell upon a grim figure standing by itself, in some finery that was sober and

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of an old-fashioned cut, and whose eyes were also wandering round the room in search of something. It was Margaret; and though for a moment Lucy felt the old repulsion, her real feeling was that of an overpowering tumult, half of uneasiness, half terror, for she had an instinct that *he* had returned also. For all through she had associated the two. Here was Margaret returned without him. Her heart sank. She fancied she saw a triumphant, defiant look in Margaret's face. She could not restrain herself, and, fluttering over, stood before her, downcast and trembling.

"Oh," she said, "you have returned! Where is *he*?"

Margaret looked down on her coldly. "Yes, he has returned, but *not to you!*"

Lucy had, indeed, seen that handsome face afar off, flashing in a crowd of other faces. It was coming towards her; but she saw it was grave and sad. He did not speak to Margaret. Lucy flew to him.

"Oh, I am so glad," said Lucy, her joy prevailing over every other feeling of doubt and coming terror. "Oh, you have come back, I was afraid you had left us for ever."

Now she noticed the gloom and almost hopeless agony in his face. He said:

"Come away with me out of this crowd."

Margaret, standing by them like some evil angel, never spoke. She looked after them with her dull smile. "I shall wait and see this out," she said. And thus the pair passed through the room, to the amazement and disappointment of the crowd. What! come back, and in so dramatic a way?

"But there's a screw loose somewhere," said Captain Filby, "depend on it. Didn't you see the hang-dog look?"

Though she had a presentiment of some mystery coming, Lucy looked up fondly at her handsome lover now restored to her, as she made that gratifying progress through the room.

"Lucy, Lucy dear," he said, when they had got free of the crowd, "what will you say to me? I have returned, but, oh! it has failed! How shall I tell you? But we must not think of—of—marriage yet, for years perhaps; indeed, we should never have thought of it." She turned pale, and, stopping short, gave a faint cry.

"Listen a moment. There is one course which I *could* do, and which I *should* do; for you must not be sacrificed. I could wait—wait on here until a change came."

"And why not?" said Lucy, eagerly. "If you are willing, I am willing—as long—as long as *you* will."

"But that, Lucy, would be dearly purchased. I should have to leave the army. We are on the eve of some fighting, and for a colonel to desert his regiment——"

"No, no," said she, "never! As you say, it would be our disgrace. But," she added, almost passionately, "I know this dreadful mystery that seems growing in size every moment? I know it," she repeated, firmly, "and I believe and trust in you as much as I love you. There! I know what you shall do, and what you must do. You must go—leave this on the day fixed. Never think of me. I shall face these people, if I know that you are true to me—*that* will support me—and will look forward patiently to the day when I shall see you return."

A light came into his eyes. "Sweet, dearest girl, if you *can* have such a trust in me, I believe it to be the only course. Any other brings ruin and despair. Ah! see, she is watching us!" and they saw the figure standing not very far off, stiffly and haughtily, with her cold eyes on them.

"She hates me, and would kill me, I believe if she could," said Lucy, excitedly.

"Yes; she thinks, too, she has me in her power, and is watching my struggles; but we shall defy her yet."

"Why not now?" said Lucy, still excited. "Tell her *now* of what we have resolved on. That would destroy all her wicked schemes. Come, quick!" Lucy eagerly drew her lover over, and was before Margaret in a moment, who still watched their approach calmly, "I know all," said Lucy to her; "and we have settled everything. He shall go; and I can wait—wait for years—until he returns when every obstacle shall have passed away—and shall hope and pray for his return."

"Yes," added Vivian, "and you can return to your unhappy brother, whose passions you are working on, with news that I defy your threats, and that this Dear Girl trusts me, and trusts me for ever."

Two bright triumphant faces were looking at her, full of love, hope, happiness, and security. In spite of her cold command of herself, a look of baffled rage worked in her features, yet it was the rage of the lioness who cannot protect her whelps. She said not a word; but, as they turned away, looked after them with a sort of despair.

"Then is this the end of all my schemes? *They* will be happy at last, and *he* wretched for ever! And I am to go back to his sick bed, where he is lying in feverish expectation for this great news. It will kill him. My poor, poor brother!" She was baffled, but she did not leave the ball-room yet.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER X.

ONE on the top of the other, the rest of the company followed the Ablewhites, till we had the whole tale of them complete. Including the family, they were twenty-four in all. It was a noble sight to see, when they were settled in their places round the dinner-table, and the Rector of Frizinghall (with beautiful elocution) rose and said grace.

There is no need to worry you with a list of the guests. You will meet none of them a second time—in my part of the story, at any rate—with the exception of two.

Those two sat on either side of Miss Rachel, who, as queen of the day, was naturally the great attraction of the party. On this occasion, she was more particularly the centre-point towards which everybody's eyes were directed; for (to my lady's secret annoyance) she wore her wonderful birthday present which eclipsed all the rest—the Moonstone. It was without any setting when it had been placed in her hands; but that universal genius, Mr. Franklin, had contrived, with the help of his neat fingers and a little bit of silver wire, to fix it as a brooch in the bosom of her white dress. Everybody wondered at the prodigious size and beauty of the Diamond, as a matter of course. But the only two of the company who said anything out of the common way about it, were those two guests I have mentioned, who sat by Miss Rachel on her right hand and her left.

The guest on her left was Mr. Candy, our doctor at Frizinghall.

This was a pleasant, companionable little man, with the drawback, however, I must own, of being too fond, in season and out of season, of his joke, and of plunging in rather a headlong manner into talk with strangers, without waiting to feel his way first. In society, he was constantly making mistakes, and setting people unintentionally by the ears together. In his medical practice he was a more prudent man; picking up his discretion (as his enemies said) by a kind of instinct, and proving to be generally right where more carefully conducted doctors turned out to be wrong. What *he* said about the Diamond to Miss Rachel was said, as usual, by way of a mystification or joke. He gravely entreated her (in the interests of science) to let him take it home and burn it. "We will first heat it, Miss Rachel," says the doctor, "to such and such a degree; then we will expose it to a current of air; and, little by little—puff!—we evaporate the Diamond, and spare you a world of anxiety about the safe keeping of a valuable precious stone!" My lady, listening with rather a careworn expression on her face, seemed to wish that the doctor had been in earnest, and that he could have found Miss Rachel zealous enough in the cause of science to sacrifice her birthday gift.

The other guest who sat on my young lady's right hand was an eminent public character—being no other than the celebrated Indian traveller, Mr. Murthwaite, who, at risk of his life, had penetrated in disguise where no European had ever set foot before.

This was a long, lean, wiry, brown, silent man. He had a weary look, and a very steady attentive eye. It was rumoured that he was tired of the humdrum life among the people in our parts, and longing to go back and wander off on the tramp again in the wild places of the East. Except what he said to Miss Rachel about her jewel, I doubt if he spoke six words, or drank so much as a single glass of wine, all through the dinner. The Moonstone was the only object that interested him in the smallest degree. The fame of it seemed to have reached him, in some of those perilous Indian places where his wanderings had lain. After looking at it silently for so long a time that Miss Rachel began to get confused, he said to her in his cool immovable way, "If you ever go to India, Miss Verinder, don't take your uncle's birthday gift with you. A Hindoo diamond is sometimes a part of a Hindoo religion. I know a certain city, and a certain temple in that city, where, dressed as you are now, your life would not be worth five minutes' purchase." Miss Rachel, safe in England, was quite delighted to hear of her danger in India. The Bouncers were more delighted still; they dropped their knives and forks with a crash, and burst out together vehemently, "O! how interesting!" My lady fidgeted in her chair, and changed the subject.

As the dinner got on, I became aware, little

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by little, that this festival was not prospering as other like festivals had prospered before it.

Looking back at the birthday now, by the light of what happened afterwards, I am half inclined to think that the cursed Diamond must have cast a blight on the whole company. I plied them well with wine; and, being a privileged character, followed the unpopular dishes round the table, and whispered to the company confidentially, "Please to change your mind, and try it; for I know it will do you good." Nine times out of ten they changed their minds—out of regard for their old original Betteredge, they were pleased to say—but all to no purpose. There were gaps of silence in the talk, as the dinner got on, that made me feel personally uncomfortable. When they did use their tongues again, they used them innocently, in the most unfortunate manner and to the worst possible purpose. Mr. Candy, the doctor, for instance, said more unlucky things than I ever knew him to say before. Take one sample of the way in which he went on, and you will understand what I had to put up with at the side-board, officiating as I was in the character of a man who had the prosperity of the festival at heart.

One of our ladies present at dinner was worthy Mrs. Threadgall, widow of the late Professor of that name. Talking of her deceased husband perpetually, this good lady never mentioned to strangers that he *was* deceased. She thought, I suppose, that every able-bodied adult in England ought to know as much as that. In one of the gaps of silence, somebody mentioned the dry and rather nasty subject of human anatomy; whereupon good Mrs. Threadgall straightway brought in her late husband as usual, without mentioning that he was dead. Anatomy she described as the Professor's favourite recreation in his leisure hours. As ill-luck would have it, Mr. Candy, sitting opposite (who knew nothing of the deceased gentleman), heard her. Being the most polite of men, he seized the opportunity of assisting the Professor's anatomical amusements on the spot.

"They have got some remarkably fine skeletons lately at the College of Surgeons," says Mr. Candy, across the table, in a loud cheerful voice. "I strongly recommend the Professor, ma'am, when he next has an hour to spare, to pay them a visit."

You might have heard a pin fall. The company (out of respect to the Professor's memory) all sat speechless. I was behind Mrs. Threadgall at the time, plying her confidentially with a glass of hock. She dropped her head, and said in a very low voice, "My beloved husband is no more."

Unlucky Mr. Candy, hearing nothing, and miles away from suspecting the truth, went on across the table louder and politer than ever.

"The Professor may not be aware," says he, "that the card of a member of the College will admit him, on any day but Sunday, between the hours of ten and four."

Mrs. Threadgall dropped her head right into her tucker, and, in a lower voice still, repeated the solemn words, "My beloved husband is no more."

I winked hard at Mr. Candy across the table. Miss Rachel touched his arm. My lady looked unutterable things at him. Quite useless! On he went, with a cordiality that there was no stopping any how. "I shall be delighted," says he, "to send the Professor my card, if you will oblige me by mentioning his present address?"

"His present address, sir, is *the grave*," says Mrs. Threadgall, suddenly losing her temper, and speaking with an emphasis and fury that made the glasses ring again. "The Professor has been dead these ten years!"

"Oh, good Heavens!" says Mr. Candy. Excepting the Bouncers, who burst out laughing, such a blank now fell on the company, that they might all have been going the way of the Professor, and hailing as he did from the direction of the grave.

So much for Mr. Candy. The rest of them were nearly as provoking in their different ways as the doctor himself. When they ought to have spoken, they didn't speak; or when they did speak, they were perpetually at cross purposes. Mr. Godfrey, though so eloquent in public, declined to exert himself in private. Whether he was sulky, or whether he was bashful, after his discomfiture in the rose-garden, I can't say. He kept all his talk for the private ear of the lady who sat next to him. She was one of his committee-women—a spiritually minded person, with a fine show of collar-bone and a pretty taste in champagne; liked it dry, you understand, and plenty of it. Being close behind these two at the side-board, I can testify, from what I heard pass between them, that the company lost a good deal of very improving conversation, which I caught up while drawing the corks, and carving the mutton, and so forth. What they said about their Charities I didn't hear. When I had time to listen to them, they had got a long way beyond their women to be confined, and their women to be rescued, and were buckling to on serious subjects. Religion (I understood them to say, between the corks and the carving) meant love. And love meant religion. And earth was heaven a little the worse for wear. And heaven was earth, done up again to look like new. Earth had some very objectionable people in it; but, to make amends for that, all the women in heaven would be members of a prodigious committee that never quarrelled, with all the men in attendance on them as ministering angels. Beautiful! beautiful! But why the mischief did Mr. Godfrey keep it all to his lady and himself?

Mr. Franklin again—surely, you will say, Mr. Franklin stirred the company up into making a pleasant evening of it?

Nothing of the sort! He had quite recovered himself, and he was in wonderful force and spirits, Penelope having informed

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him, I suspect, of Mr. Godfrey's reception in the rose-garden. But, talk as he might, nine times out of ten he pitched on the wrong subject, or he addressed himself to the wrong person; the end of it being that he offended some, and puzzled all of them. That foreign training of his—those French and German and Italian sides of him, to which I have already alluded, came out, at my lady's hospitable board, in a most bewildering manner.

What do you think, for instance, of his discussing the lengths to which a married woman might let her admiration go for a man who was not her husband, and putting it in his clear-headed witty French way to the maiden aunt of the Vicar of Frizinghall? What do you think, when he shifted to the German side, of his telling the lord of the manor, while that great authority on cattle was quoting his experience in the breeding of bulls, that experience, properly understood, counted for nothing, and that the proper way to breed bulls was to look deep into your own mind, evolve out of it the idea of a perfect bull, and produce him? What do you say, when our county member, growing hot at cheese and salad time, about the spread of democracy in England, burst out as follows: "If we once lose our ancient safeguards, Mr. Blake, I beg to ask you, what have we got left?"—what do you say to Mr. Franklin answering, from the Italian point of view: "We have got three things left, sir—Love, Music, and Salad"? He not only terrified the company with such outbreaks as these, but, when the English side of him turned up in due course, he lost his foreign smoothness; and, getting on the subject of the medical profession, said such downright things in ridicule of doctors, that he actually put good-humoured little Mr. Candy in a rage.

The dispute between them began in Mr. Franklin being led—I forget how—to acknowledge that he had latterly slept very badly at night. Mr. Candy thereupon told him that his nerves were all out of order, and that he ought to go through a course of medicine immediately. Mr. Franklin replied that a course of medicine, and a course of groping in the dark, meant, in his estimation, one and the same thing. Mr. Candy, hitting back smartly, said that Mr. Franklin himself was, constitutionally speaking, groping in the dark after sleep, and that nothing but medicine could help him to find it. Mr. Franklin, keeping the ball up on his side, said he had often heard of the blind leading the blind, and now, for the first time, he knew what it meant. In this way, they kept it going briskly, cut and thrust, till they both of them got hot—Mr. Candy, in particular, so completely losing his self-control, in defence of his profession, that my lady was obliged to interfere, and forbid the dispute to go on. This necessary act of authority put the last extinguisher on the spirits of the company. The talk spurted up again here and there, for a minute or two at a time; but there was a miserable lack of life and sparkle in it. The Devil (or the Diamond) possessed that dinner-party; and it was a relief to everybody when my mistress rose, and gave the ladies the signal to leave the gentlemen over their wine.

I had just ranged the decanters in a row before old Mr. Ablewhite (who represented the master of the house), when there came a sound from the terrace which startled me out of my company manners on the instant. Mr. Franklin and I looked at each other; it was the sound of the Indian drum. As I live by bread, here were the jugglers returning to us with the return of the Moonstone to the house!

As they rounded the corner of the terrace, and came in sight, I hobbled out to warn them off. But, as ill-luck would have it, the two Bouncers were beforehand with me. They whizzed out on to the terrace like a couple of skyrockets, wild to see the Indians exhibit their tricks. The other ladies followed; the gentlemen came out on their side. Before you could say, "Lord bless us!" the rogues were making their salaams; and the Bouncers were kissing the pretty little boy.

Mr. Franklin got on one side of Miss Rachel, and I put myself behind her. If our suspicions were right, there she stood, innocent of all knowledge of the truth, showing the Indians the Diamond in the bosom of her dress!

I can't tell you what tricks they performed, or how they did it. What with the vexation about the dinner, and what with the provocation of the rogues coming back just in the nick of time to see the jewel with their own eyes, I own I lost my head. The first thing that I remember noticing was the sudden appearance on the scene of the Indian traveller, Mr. Murthwaite. Skirting the half-circle in which the gentlefolks stood or sat, he came quietly behind the jugglers, and spoke to them on a sudden in the language of their own country.

If he had pricked them with a bayonet, I doubt if the Indians could have started and turned on him with a more tigerish quickness than they did, on hearing the first words that passed his lips. The next moment, they were bowing and salaaming to him in their most polite and snaky way. After a few words in the unknown tongue had passed on either side, Mr. Murthwaite withdrew as quietly as he had approached. The chief Indian, who acted as interpreter, thereupon wheeled about again towards the gentlefolks. I noticed that the fellow's coffee-coloured face had turned grey since Mr. Murthwaite had spoken to him. He bowed to my lady, and informed her that the exhibition was over. The Bouncers, indescribably disappointed, burst out with a loud "O!" directed against Mr. Murthwaite for stopping the performance. The chief Indian laid his hand humbly on his breast, and said a second time that the juggling was over. The little boy went round with the hat. The ladies withdrew to the drawing-room; and the gentlemen (excepting Mr. Franklin and Mr. Murthwaite) returned to their wine. I and the footman fol-

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lowed the Indians, and saw them safe off the premises.

Going back by way of the shrubbery, I smelt tobacco, and found Mr. Franklin and Mr. Murthwaite (the latter smoking a cheroot) walking slowly up and down among the trees. Mr. Franklin beckoned to me to join them.

"This," says Mr. Franklin, presenting me to the great traveller, "is Gabriel Betteredge, the old servant and friend of our family, of whom I spoke to you just now. Tell him, if you please, what you have just told me."

Mr. Murthwaite took his cheroot out of his mouth, and leaned, in his weary way, against the trunk of a tree.

"Mr. Betteredge," he began, "those three Indians are no more jugglers than you and I are."

Here was a new surprise! I naturally asked the traveller if he had ever met with the Indians before.

"Never," says Mr. Murthwaite; "but I know what Indian juggling really is. All you have seen to-night is a very bad and clumsy imitation of it. Unless, after long experience, I am utterly mistaken, those men are high-caste Brahmins. I charged them with being disguised, and you saw how it told on them, clever as the Hindoo people are in concealing their feelings. There is a mystery about their conduct that I can't explain. They have doubly sacrificed their caste—first, in crossing the sea; secondly, in disguising themselves as jugglers. In the land they live in, that is a tremendous sacrifice to make. There must be some very serious motive at the bottom of it, and some justification of no ordinary kind to plead for them, in recovery of their caste, when they return to their own country."

I was struck dumb. Mr. Murthwaite went on with his cheroot. Mr. Franklin, after what looked to me like a little private veering about between the different sides of his character, broke the silence as follows, speaking in his nice Italian manner, with his solid English foundation showing through:

"I feel some hesitation, Mr. Murthwaite, in troubling you with family matters, in which you can have no interest, and which I am not very willing to speak of out of our own circle. But, after what you have said, I feel bound, in the interests of Lady Verinder and her daughter, to tell you something which may possibly put the clue into your hands. I speak to you in confidence; you will oblige me, I am sure, by not forgetting that?"

With this preface, he told the Indian traveller (speaking now in his clear-headed French way) all that he had told me at the Shivering Sand. Even the immovable Mr. Murthwaite was so interested in what he heard, that he let his cheroot go out.

"Now," says Mr. Franklin, when he had done, "what does your experience say?"

"My experience," answered the traveller, "says that you have had more narrow escapes of your life, Mr. Franklin Blake, than I have had of mine; and that is saying a great deal."

It was Mr. Franklin's turn to be astonished now.

"Is it really as serious as that?" he asked.

"In my opinion it is," answered Mr. Murthwaite. "I can't doubt, after what you have told me, that the restoration of the Moonstone to its place on the forehead of the Indian idol is the motive and the justification of that sacrifice of caste which I alluded to just now. Those men will wait their opportunity with the patience of cats, and will use it with the ferocity of tigers. How you have escaped them I can't imagine," says the eminent traveller, lighting his cheroot again, and staring hard at Mr. Franklin. "You have been carrying the Diamond backwards and forwards, here and in London, and you are still a living man! Let us try and account for it. It was daylight, both times, I suppose, when you took the jewel out of the bank in London?"

"Broad daylight," says Mr. Franklin.

"And plenty of people in the streets?"

"Plenty."

"You settled, of course, to arrive at Lady Verinder's house at a certain time? It's a lonely country between this and the station. Did you keep your appointment?"

"No. I arrived four hours earlier than my appointment."

"I beg to congratulate you on that proceeding! When did you take the Diamond to the bank at the town here?"

"I took it an hour after I had brought it to this house—and three hours before anybody was prepared for seeing me in these parts."

"I beg to congratulate you again! Did you bring it back here alone?"

"No. I happened to ride back with my cousins and the groom."

"I beg to congratulate you for the third time! If you ever feel inclined to travel beyond the civilised limits, Mr. Blake, let me know, and I will go with you. You are a lucky man."

Here I struck in. This sort of thing didn't at all square with my English ideas.

"You don't really mean to say, sir," I asked, "that they would have taken Mr. Franklin's life, to get their Diamond, if he had given them the chance?"

"Do you smoke, Mr. Betteredge?" says the traveller.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you care much for the ashes left in your pipe, when you empty it?"

"No, sir."

"In the country those men came from, they care just as much about killing a man, as you care about emptying the ashes out of your pipe. If a thousand lives stood between them and the getting back of their Diamond—and if they thought they could destroy those lives without discovery — they would take them all. The sacrifice of caste is a serious thing in India, if you like. The sacrifice of life is nothing at all."

I expressed my opinion, upon this, that they were a set of murdering thieves. Mr. Murthwaite expressed *his* opinion that they were a wonderful people. Mr. Franklin, expressing no opinion at all, brought us back to the matter in hand.

"They have seen the Moonstone on Miss Verinder's dress," he said. "What is to be done?"

"What your uncle threatened to do," answered Mr. Murthwaite. "Colonel Herncastle understood the people he had to deal with. Send the Diamond to-morrow (under guard of more than one man) to be cut up at Amsterdam. Make half a dozen diamonds of it, instead of one. There is an end of its sacred identity as The Moonstone—and there is an end of the conspiracy."

Mr. Franklin turned to me.

"There is no help for it," he said. "We must speak to Lady Verinder to-morrow."

"What about to-night, sir?" I asked. "Suppose the Indians come back?"

Mr. Murthwaite answered me, before Mr. Franklin could speak.

"The Indians won't risk coming back to-night," he said. "The direct way is hardly ever the way they take to anything—let alone a matter like this, in which the slightest mistake might be fatal to their reaching their end."

"But suppose the rogues are bolder than you think, sir?" I persisted.

"In that case," says Mr. Murthwaite, "let the dogs loose. Have you got any big dogs in the yard?"

"Two, sir. A mastiff and a bloodhound."

"They will do. In the present emergency, Mr. Betteredge, the mastiff and the bloodhound have one great merit—they are not likely to be troubled with your scruples about the sanctity of human life."

The strumming of the piano reached us from the drawing-room, as he fired that shot at me. He threw away his cheroot, and took Mr. Franklin's arm, to go back to the ladies. I noticed that the sky was clouding over fast, as I followed them to the house. Mr. Murthwaite noticed it too. He looked round at me, in his dry, drolling way, and said:

"The Indians will want their umbrellas, Mr. Betteredge, to-night!"

It was all very well for *him* to joke. But I was not an eminent traveller—and my way in this world had not led me into playing ducks and drakes with my own life, among thieves and murderers in the outlandish places of the earth. I went into my own little room, and sat down in my chair in a perspiration, and wondered helplessly what was to be done next. In this anxious frame of mind, other men might have ended by working themselves up into a fever; *I* ended in a different way. I lit my pipe, and took a turn at Robinson Crusoe.

Before I had been at it five minutes, I came to this amazing bit—page one hundred and sixty-one—as follows:

"Fear of Danger is ten thousand times more terrifying than Danger itself, when apparent to the Eyes; and we find the Burthen of Anxiety greater, by much, than the Evil which we are anxious about."

The man who doesn't believe in Robinson Crusoe, after *that*, is a man with a screw loose in his understanding, or a man lost in the mist of his own self-conceit! Argument is thrown away upon him; and pity is better reserved for some person with a livelier faith.

I was far on with my second pipe, and still lost in admiration of that wonderful book, when Penelope (who had been handing round the tea) came in with her report from the drawing-room. She had left the Bouncers singing a duet—words beginning with a large "O," and music to correspond. She had observed that my lady made mistakes in her game of whist for the first time in our experience of her. She had seen the great traveller asleep in a corner. She had overheard Mr. Franklin sharpening his wits on Mr. Godfrey, at the expense of Ladies' Charities in general; and she had noticed that Mr. Godfrey hit him back again rather more smartly than became a gentleman of his benevolent character. She had detected Miss Rachel, apparently engaged in appeasing Mrs. Threadgall by showing her some photographs, and really occupied in stealing looks at Mr. Franklin which no intelligent lady's maid could misinterpret for a single instant. Finally, she had missed Mr. Candy, the doctor, who had mysteriously disappeared from the drawing-room, and had then mysteriously returned, and entered into conversation with Mr. Godfrey. Upon the whole, things were prospering better than the experience of the dinner gave us any right to expect. If we could only hold on for another hour, old Father Time would bring up their carriages, and relieve us of them altogether.

Everything wears off in this world; and even the comforting effect of Robinson Crusoe wore off, after Penelope left me. I got fidgety again, and resolved on making a survey of the grounds before the rain came. Instead of taking the footman, whose nose was human, and therefore useless in any emergency, I took the bloodhound with me. *His* nose for a stranger was to be depended on. We went all round the premises, and out into the road; and returned as wise as we went, having discovered no such thing as a lurking human creature anywhere. I chained up the dog again, for the present; and, returning once more by way of the shrubbery, met two of our gentlemen coming out towards me from the drawing-room. The two were Mr. Candy and Mr. Godfrey, still (as Penelope had reported them) in conversation together, and laughing softly over some pleasant conceit of their own. I thought it rather odd that those two should have run up a friendship together—but passed on, of course, without appearing to notice them.

The arrival of the carriages was the signal for the arrival of the rain. It poured as if it meant to pour all night. With the exception of the doctor, whose gig was waiting for him,

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the rest of the company went home snugly under cover in close carriages. I told Mr. Candy that I was afraid he would get wet through. He told me, in return, that he wondered I had arrived at my time of life, without knowing that a doctor's skin was waterproof. So he drove away in the rain, laughing over his own little joke; and so we got rid of our dinner company,

The next thing to tell is the story of the night.

A LONG LOOK-OUT.

An anxiously expected event is entered in the books as coming off, not to-morrow, nor yet the next day, nor even so soon as to-morrow twelvemonth; but as surely as Time makes the music of the spheres by turning the cranks of their respective barrels—they do not want St. Peter to wind them up, as Byron romanced in some naughty verses—so surely will that phenomenon occur when the spheres have performed their due number of revolutions.

The interval will not be too long to employ in completing a few preliminary arrangements, in making a few preparatory studies, in deciding on stations for a good look-out, in regulating time-pieces, and polishing spy-glasses. For although the sight to be beheld—weather permitting—belongs to the class of solar eclipses, it is not one of those. in which much can be done by bits of smoked glass and blackened noses, or by mounting three-legged stools to get a nearer view. It is the Transit of Venus across the disk of the Sun—a would-be eclipse of the Sun by Venus; an attempt, in short, on the part of the Morning Star, Lucifer, or l'Etoile du Berger, to deprive us of the light of day.

The questions at issue to be decided by this event are, Where we are? and, as a corollary therefrom, How much we weigh?—"We" being not merely you and I (although our weight, of course, does count for something), but We, the planet Earth and our satellite, the Moon, travelling together in friendly company round, and round, and round the Sun. "Where we are," moreover, includes Where the Sun is—a matter by no means so clear as the public fancy.

The school-books give his distance from us as ninety-five millions of miles, to a furlong. But people, who have got past their school-books, dispute about several millions, more or less. It is understood, however, that whether the Sun be eventually brought forward or pushed further back by future calculations, he is to light and warm us all the same, pretty much as heretofore. His *exact* distance is hoped to be determined by the transits of Venus which are to take place on the ninth of December, 1874, and on the sixth of December, 1882, respectively. If we fail in satisfying our scruples then, another chance will be offered to us on the eighth of June, 2004, and on the fifth of June, 2012.

Moreover, the spectacle we are patiently awaiting in 1874 has almost the charm of novelty. True, it has been repeated, over and over again, numbers of times incalculable. Before there was human eye to witness it, it occurred at its stated times and seasons. And after there were human eyes, it re-occurred without their being the wiser for it. The shepherds who watched their flocks by night—who noted the disappearance of old stars and the sudden appearance of new ones — knew nothing of our expected curious phenomenon; not because it is a daylight spectacle (for, if those Chaldean shepherds were so clearsighted by night, we may be sure they were not blind by day), but because their eyes, good as they were, were not sharp enough to detect the presence of *that* test-object. An eagle's vision only had a chance of obtaining (unassisted) cognizance of what was then occurring. Their astronomical pursuits were checked by a difficulty analogous to that set forth in "How should he cut it without a knife?—How should he marry without a wife?" For, respecting those primeval observers, it may be asked, "How should they know it without an almanack? How should they see it without a telescope?"

Our interest in the coming phenomenon is increased by the circumstance that the passages of the planet Venus across the solar disk are extremely rare. And what is still more curious, they happen in couples. We have to wait for a long, long interval—more than three generations at the least—before we have the chance of seeing the first (in 1874); and then, if we can contrive to live for eight years longer, the celestial orrery presents us with another. After which, more than a century has to elapse before we are favoured with a third transit.

The first observed passage of Venus across the sun's disk happened on the 4th of December, 1639. Delambre has calculated a list of the transits of Venus from that one up to the twenty-fourth century—to be continued by future astronomers in future almanacks. As it is not long, we give it here entire. The letters N. and S. appended to each date denote whether it is the northern or the southern hemisphere of the sun which will be traversed by the planet. What marvellous precision in the celestial movements! What a prodigious feat of science to be able to predict them!

4	December	1639	S.
6	June	1761	S.
3	June	1769	N.
9	December	1874	N.
6	December	1882	S.
8	June	2004	S.
5	June	2012	N.
11	December	2117	N.
8	December	2125	S.
11	June	2247	S.
9	June	2255	N.
12	December	2360	N.
10	December	2368	S.

We herein remark that the transits of Venus, occurring in couples with an interval of eight

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years between each transit, correspond alternately to the month of June and the month of December. The couples of transits are separated from each other by an interval of time which is alternately one hundred and five and one hundred and twenty-two years. They all take place shortly before one of the solstices—the winter or the summer solstice—a circumstance favourable for obtaining, by a wise selection of points of observation, very considerable differences in the duration of the phenomenon, as seen from those diverse distant localities.

The last observation (by English astronomers) is recorded in a prose idyll, to read which takes you back thousands of years in respect of facts, if not of time. A retrogression of a thousand years would hardly bring you to such a state of society as was found, then alive and in the flesh, in the enchanted isle of Otaheite. It was like finding some region where fossil plants still grow, and extinct animals still roam at liberty. Dear old Captain Cook, we retain your spelling as affectionately as we cherish your narratives. And unfortunately there are no more such islands to be discovered, nor ever will be—no more such romantic voyages to be written. No more sailors, landing at Botany Bay, will rush on board in a fright at having seen the devil (a kangaroo) with a body as big round as a barrel; no more savages will be found polite to sailors, believing them the representatives of the fair sex of England.

Cook might well call the hill where the observatory was fixed for watching the transit, "Venus Point." Those, indeed, were days of the Golden Age, inasmuch as his object in carrying out astronomers to Otaheite was, that, by observing the transit of Venus there, they might determine the sun's parallax with greater accuracy than heretofore.

The Sun plays so all-important a part in our existence, that the interest attached to the knowledge of his distance from the Earth is much greater than would appear at first sight, and considering it as a simple isolated fact. For that distance serves to estimate the distances of the heavenly bodies one from another. Consequently, at every epoch, astronomers have done their utmost to accomplish the measurement of this fundamental distance.

In order to find the length of any unknown distance, we must take some other length or distance which we do know, and find out how many times it is contained in the other. The known distance which we use as our measure, and which is called the *base* or the *unity of* our measurement, is divided, if required, into a certain number of equal parts, in case the distance to be measured should not contain it an exact number of times, and there should be a remainder, which, of course, would be less than the base or unity. Thus, to ascertain the length of a wall, or a piece of stuff, you apply a yard measure to it as many times as it will go; and then you measure the remainder, if there be any, by subdividing the yard into feet and inches. But if we confined ourselves to the yard, or to any other single unity, for the measurement of all lengths, we should find much embarrassment in applying it either to enormous or to minute distances. With what precision can we figure to ourselves a billion of yards, or of the millionth part of a yard? We hear them named without their impressing us with any definite idea.

In order to avoid excessively large numbers leaving excessively small ones out of the question, as they do not concern us on the present occasion—we are obliged to replace the yard by a larger unity, when considerable distances have to be measured. Thus, roads are measured by the mile. But if the yard is inapplicable to the measurement of terrestrial distances, it is still more useless for such distances as from star to star. It is impossible to form any idea either of those distances or of their relative proportions amongst themselves, unless we start from some typical distance belonging to the same order of magnitude as themselves.

For ascertaining the dimensions of surrounding objects and their relative distances from each other, a very natural proceeding is to take, as a term of comparison and a unity of measurement, some one part of the human body. Such evidently was the origin of the unities of measurement known as "cubits," "feet," "palms," &c. For journeys by sea and land, recourse was had to unities of measure derived from the dimensions of the terrestrial globe; such as the ordinary league (the twenty-fifth part of a degree, which is the three hundred and sixtieth part of the Earth's circumference), and the marine league (the twentieth part of a degree). In these cases, the terrestrial globe is substituted for the human body, to serve as a term of comparison between the different distances travelled on its surface.

But if, from these terrestrial distances, we proceed to those which separate the stars, even those which are nearest to us (always excepting the Moon), the dimensions of our globe then become much too small to serve as the unity of measure for those enormous intervals of space. We can only form a clear notion of their relative lengths by comparing them with a unity of their own class. The distance which separates us from the Sun (for us the most influential of all the heavenly bodies) becomes, then, naturally the new term of comparison, the new unity of measurement which we are induced to adopt. The Sun's distance is determined by his parallax; and his parallax is expected to be still more accurately ascertained by observations of the promised transit of Venus.

Parallax is the angle formed by an object with two different observers placed at different stations. Thus, suppose this letter A to be greatly magnified, or to be traced on the surface of a ten-acre field; fix an object, as a flag-staff, at the apex, or top of the A, and an observer at each of its feet, the angle formed by the legs of the A will be, to them, the *parallax* of the flag-staff. It will hence be clear that the nearer an object is, the greater will be its parallax, the

position of the observers remaining the same. For instance, if the flag-staff were brought forward to the cross-bar of the A, the angle it would then form, with the observers at the feet, would be considerably greater than when it stood at the top of the letter. On the other hand, suppose the flag-staff removed to a great distance—say half a mile away — the angle, or parallax, would be enormously diminished, tapering almost to a needle's point.

When we have the whole Earth as our place of observation instead of a small ten-acre enclosure, and the heavenly bodies for objects instead of flag-staffs or trees, the *scale* is altered, but not the truth of the facts. Throughout the universe, all is relative. As on the Earth's surface objects may be so distant that their parallax for neighbouring observers is excessively small; so do there exist in open space visible objects removed from us by such enormous intervals that their parallax, seen, not only from any part of the Earth, but from any part of the Earth's orbit, is imperceptible. The fixed stars have no parallax for us. The dog star alone, the nearest and the brightest of them, is said to *have* a parallax, though of extremest smallness.

Of course it is only when parallax is perceptible that it can be made to serve as a measure of distance; and, unfortunately, the smaller it is, the greater is the difficulty of calculating it exactly. The parallax of some of the planets, in certain parts of their orbits, is quite appreciable. Mars, when on the same side of the Sun with ourselves and seen by observers placed at distant spots on the earth, say Paris and Cayenne, appears at the same moment to occupy different positions in the sky. The Sun, more distant, has a much smaller parallax, which is consequently more difficult of determination.

During every one of our waking hours, our unassisted eyes are continually noting the parallax of surrounding objects, without our having studied astronomy, and without our even being aware of it. We are trigonometricians in spite of ourselves. We unconsciously solve problems which, on a larger scale, mathematicians are proud to work out with much mental labour. Observe that I have written "eyes," in the plural, because a single eye cannot do the same thing.

This unsuspected, every-day process is one of the means by which we judge of distance:

You are comfortably sitting by the fire in your parlour; on the window-sill is a geranium in leaf; on the opposite side of the street or square is a house which probably has windows. Shut one eye, and bring one leaf of the geranium in exact line with one of the windows of the opposite house. Then, without stirring a hair's breadth if you can help it, open the closed eye and shut the open one. The leaf will no longer be in line with the distant window. Seen from a different point of view, it will be in line with something else. It is the combination of what is seen by each eye separately which gives their relief and their perspective to the flat pictures seen in a stereoscope — an optical toy which is useless to a one-eyed man.

As the geranium leaf appears to each of our eyes separately to occupy a different position with reference to the window on the opposite side of the street, so does Venus, while making her transit across the Sun, appear to two distant observers on the surface of the Earth to occupy a different position with reference to the Sun. The marvel is that, from these apparently different positions, mathematicians should have deduced, with a wonderful approach to perfect precision, the enormous distance from the Earth to the Sun.

The admirable idea of calculating the Sun's parallax from observations of the transits of Venus is due to Halley. In 1678, while, still quite young, he was observing, in the Island of St. Helena, the stars surrounding the South Pole of the heavens (which, consequently, are invisible to us), when, happening to observe a passage of Mercury across the Sun, he was struck with the exactitude resulting from the observation of the beginning and the end of the phenomenon—the consequence of the formation or the rupture of a tiny thread of light between the disk of the planet and that of the Sun at the precise moment of the interior contact of the two disks. He immediately comprehended that from this class of observations the parallax of the Sun might be accurately deduced. But for that purpose he also saw it was very desirable that the intervening planet should be further away from the Sun than Mercury is, and nearer to the Earth. Venus satisfies this condition. He therefore worked out his original idea, applying it to the transits of Venus for determining the parallax of the Sun with a very close approximation to the truth, inasmuch as he believed that the error committed would not exceed the *five-hundreth* part of the real value.

Halley communicated his method to the world in 1691, in a Memoir which appeared in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, No. 193. He afterwards, in 1716, supplied to No. 348 of the same publication all the developments necessary to demonstrate its great importance. He even gave the instructions for applying his theory to the next expected transit of Venus, which would occur in the month of June, 1761. As Halley was then (1716) sixty years of age, he could have little hope of witnessing the results of his own discovery, which promised such excellent chances of success in determining the precise distance of the Sun from the Earth.

In what has been said, the distance from the Earth to the Sun is spoken of as a determinate, unchangeable quantity. We know, however, that that distance is constantly varying from day to day. The fact may be ascertained with the greatest facility by measuring the Sun's diameter at different seasons. This diameter,

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as it alternately increases and diminishes, indicates that the Sun's distance is at the same time diminishing or increasing. The extremes of the Sun's apparent distances occur about the 1st of January and the 1st of July. The extreme distances bear to each other the proportions of one hundred and seventeen to one hundred and twenty-one. When, therefore, it is said that the distance of the Earth from the Sun serves as a unity of measure, the *mean value* of that distance (half the sum of the greatest and the smallest distances) will be understood to be thereby meant.

But while we are thus looking out for Venus, I wonder what the Venusians think of us. For they persist, in spite of the late Dr. Whewell, in maintaining the habitability of their globe. They are, moreover, thoroughbred Highlanders: our grandest landscapes are tame compared with theirs. Not only is their country mountainous, but they have mountains five times as high as our very highest, to which they retreat during the summer heats. Under the shadow of rocks taller than Chimborazo, they preserve their complexions from tanning by the sun. Themselves (according to Kircher's account) are universally handsome and young; how they dispose of the old and ugly he does not say. They are dressed in iridescent garments (shot silks?) and transparent gauzes, which reflect different hues with every play of light.

Better authorities tell us that Venus must be very much what Cook found Otaheite, with what Otaheite has not—glaciers fringed with tropical vegetation. There are brilliant seas, luxurious islands, rushing waterfalls, and refreshing winds—with a great probability of hurricanes, cyclones, and tornadoes upsetting everything. Although Venus has no moon of her own, Mercury, by his brightness and close vicinity, and Terra, by her magnitude, render the service of a couple of moons, and supply her scene-painters with charming effects. Still, the Earth's surface, nearly covered with seas and veiled in a cottony, cloudy winding-sheet, would be but a bad reflector of light, and offer but a dingy spectacle. Our moon would be a curiosity, certainly singular, but by no means brilliant. All things considered, there can be little doubt that the Venusians look down upon us with an eye of pity.

MY FIRST TIGER.

No soldier who has made one of a well-organised shooting-party in India is likely to forget the feelings of pleasure and of real liberty with which he enjoyed his week or month's absence from duty. Talk of a hard-worked lawyer's annual holiday to Baden or Switzerland, it is not to be compared with the enjoyment of a month's shooting in India. In these days there is not a nook or corner of Europe—no, nor of many parts of Asia either—where you can get completely away from the worry and bother of every-day life. I know a large shareholder in Overend, Gurney's unfortunate bank who heard of his ruin when he was on the banks of the Jordan, and another friend of mine got the news that his daughter had run away with a fellow not worth a shilling, whilst he, the honoured parent, was travelling in Bulgaria. In London we are always running a race against time, and constantly losing it. Not so in India. In that country, one day is so like another, there is so very little to do and so much time to do it in, that any change from cantonment life is accounted a godsend. Even the preparation for a month's campaign is no light matter, and the occupation it affords, for a fortnight or so before leaving the station, is not the least pleasing part of the undertaking. Tents have to be bought or hired; camels or carts to carry luggage must be provided; provisions for the party, and for the servants of the party, are laid in; guns and ammunition put in order; and a thousand things must be thought of which a "griffin," or new hand in the country, would never dream were necessary. In the present instance our party consisted of Captain Ring and myself, of my own regiment; Mr. Hogan and Mr. Anger, of the Civil Service; with Major Aster, of the staff, and Dr. Hoxon, an assistant-surgeon of horse artillery. After the custom and fashion of Bengal, the native servants of these gentlemen numbered more than a hundred and fifty souls, and this without including such temporary followers as might join our camp from any of the villages we passed near. Those who have never been in the East may wonder at such an immense following; but when I enumerate the servants which each saib logue (gentleman) is obliged to keep in that country, their surprise will cease. For instance, I had to look after me—or rather for me to look after—a "kitmagar," or table-servant, a Moslem, whose sole duty it was to wait upon me at breakfast, luncheon, and dinner. Next was a "bearer," a Hindoo, who looked after my clothes, and acted as bed-maker. The third servant in social position was a masaulchie, or lamp-trimmer; the fourth, a dhobie, or washerman (no dhobie would dream of washing for two masters); the fifth, a sweeper; and though last, not least, each of my three horses had a syce, or groom, and a grasscutter—six servants connected with my stables, and five for myself, or eleven in all. Suppose each of the party to have had the same, this would have made sixty-six servants. But having fewer horses than the others, I had also fewer servants, so that the personal following of the party may be safely set down as eighty individuals. To these must be added a cook, with two assistants, a butcher, and six tent-pitchers that were in the general pay of the party, and the wives of more than half the servants, who accompanied their lords to the jungle, many of them having two and three children. Besides there were the camel-drivers; the gharry, or cart-drivers; the mahouts, or men in charge of the half-dozen elephants lent us by the Commissariat Department, each elephant having two men to cut forage for

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him, besides his drivers. And it is a curious fact that, in India, the lower the "caste" of the individual, the greater the number of children he is certain to have. Captain Ring and myself had between us seven horses; these necessitated seven syces, or grooms, and seven grass-cutters—fourteen men, eleven of whom had wives, and having amongst them twenty-eight children. When these various figures and facts are taken into consideration, it will not be deemed surprising that our following in this camp amounted to upwards of a hundred and fifty souls.

All our arrangements being ready, the servants, camp equipage, baggage, spare horses, and everything which we did not want with us was sent on ahead, with orders to form our camp at a village about fifty miles from Meerut. At certain stations on the road, about twelve or fifteen miles apart from each other, a groom with a horse belonging to each of our party was to stop, so that we might ride through without stopping, and have a change of mounts on the road. We started the day our leave of absence commenced, and in about seven hours from the time we left the cantonment we found ourselves in our camp, which was pitched under a grove of trees, and in the immediate neighbourhood of what Orientals value above all other things—a running stream of good water.

To an Englishman fond of out-door sports, and yet, to a certain degree, liking his personal comfort, I cannot imagine anything more "jolly" than a sporting camp in India. When we arrived, the servants had had plenty of time to get everything ready. Each of us had a good single-poled tent, some sixteen feet square, with double roof and double walls. Round each such tent there was a cluster of smaller tents, in which the owner's servants lived. Close behind these were his horses. A little way off, in the middle of the camp, was the mess-tent, in which we intended to breakfast, lunch, and dine, during our sojourn in the jungle. On the outskirts of the camp were the half-dozen temporary huts erected by the grain-sellers, sweetmeat-vendors, and other natives, who had followed us from Meerut, determined to attach themselves to our camp, and supply our servants during the month we were to be away from cantonments. We got to camp in time for luncheon, and passed the afternoon in making preparations for whatever sport the next day might afford; for as yet no certain news of any tiger being in the vicinity had been received, and our head shikarie—the individual whose perilous office it is to wander far and near, in order to find out where sport is to be had—was still absent.

That evening old Hassein, the shikarie, returned to camp, and brought us news—"kubber," as it is called in Anglo-Indian jargon—of a more hopeful character than is common at the outset of a shooting-party. A tiger had been lately seen at a village only two coss (or four miles) off. The animal was by no means apocryphal, for Hassein had himself seen it that very morning. The villagers themselves had not been molested by the brute; but it had destroyed three or four of their cattle, which was a serious loss to them. Its lair was not known, but it had been seen regularly to come morning and evening to a certain pool to drink; and Hassein recommended that we should start from camp about two hours before daybreak, so as to reach the spot and be ready when the animal appeared, as is the nature of its kind, to drink as soon as there is daylight enough to see any distance.

As a matter of course, this news created not a little stir among us. I can see our party now, and remember each incident that occurred, although it is more than twenty years since the events I am relating happened. We sat in various positions, and vested in curious shooting-jackets and other garments, smoking our after-dinner cigars, questioning and listening to Hassein's tale. Poor old fellow!

Long before we went to bed all our arrangements were made. There was a good, well-tried sporting elephant for each of the party; all of them, with the exception of myself, had more than once assisted at the death of a tiger. Our camp we left standing where it was, for we expected to be back before breakfast. A little after two A.M. Hassein went round our tents and awoke us, and by three o'clock we were fully under way. I, being the only young hand of the party, was entrusted especially to the care of the shikarie, who arranged to accompany me on my elephant, and thus I was pretty sure of having a good place when we got to the ground. So far as I could understand—for the old fellow's English was limited, and of Hindostanee I could only speak a very few words—from what Hassein told me on our way to the scene of action, he did not hope to get within shot of the tiger whilst the latter was at the pool, but to be able to trace the beast from thence to its usual haunts, and then beat it up in the usual manner. The tiger, as he informed me, was one which "got a madam," meaning thereby that it had, probably, a female and cubs, and could not wander very far from where the latter were to be found.

On our way to the ground, however, Hassein changed his plans. He stopped the elephants that were plodding along, each one with a sportsman and his battery of rifles on its back, and, after a long conference in Hindostanee with the rest of the party, I was told that we were to leave our elephants and proceed on foot—I being, as before, under the special care of the shikarie. The mahouts in charge of the elephants had orders to remain where they were, but to come towards us quickly the moment they heard a shot fired. After about a quarter of an hour's quick walking, we arrived at a tope, or clump of trees, situated, so far as I could judge in the moonlight, about sixty yards from a large pool of shallow water. Two of the party—Captain Ring and Mr. Hogan, who were the best shots—he placed behind a large boulder of rock, which commanded a good view of the pool, but was at least eighty yards from it; three more he placed in different trees of the small grove, whilst the "chota saib," or youngster (meaning myself),

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he took with him to the tree which was nearest the pool, and at the same time was least high from the ground, and, consequently, easiest to shoot from. These various arrangements took some little time, and they were barely complete when Hassein, who was standing on a branch just below me, pinched my arm, and, pointing with his chin to the east, made me see that the first peep of dawn was colouring the horizon. "Soon him come."

Nor had we long to wait. In the dim grey of the morning—the moon having gone down since we arrived—I could make out that there was an animal drinking at the pool; but it might have been a calf, a colt—anything. It certainly looked much smaller than I had expected to see a Bengal royal tiger; and it was not until Hassein had again and again declared it to be "him tiger," that I believed I saw my first tiger in the jungles. Hassein feared that, in my anxiety to kill, I should fire before I could see the animal well, and thus frighten him away without any of the others of the party getting a shot at him. However, the light was getting stronger every moment, and, as I very soon felt calm and self-possessed enough to take aim, I quickly cocked my single-barrelled rifle, which carried a two-ounce ball, and which I had already sighted for as near the distance as I could guess. The only fear I felt was lest some of my companions should shoot before me, and kill the brute before I could do so. This thought no doubt flurried me a little, but otherwise no more certain aim was ever taken from behind gun or rifle than I then took. Just as I was about to pull the trigger, the tiger looked up from drinking, moved a little way further into the pool, and brought his broadside nearly full to me. This, of course, made my shot all the easier, and gave me fresh courage. I aimed direct at the shoulder, and the fearful roar that followed told me plainer than any words could that I had not missed the brute.

But I had neither killed, nor even disabled, the tiger to the extent of hindering him from getting away. In a moment, and repeating again and again the tremendous roar, he had turned and was making off. As he did so, two shots rang out from the rock where my brother-officer and his companion were stationed. So far as I could judge, the first of them missed him, but the second stopped him. He stumbled forward, as a horse that has put his foot on a rolling stone might do. But in a moment he was up again, and I could now see that he dragged one of his hind legs behind him, evidently broken, whilst with one of his fore legs he limped in great pain and badly hurt. A moment more, and he was hid from our sight by some thick underwood.

Like most young sportsmen I was rash enough to wish to follow him on foot, but Captain Ring, who was, by common consent, the leader of the party, would not listen to such folly. He insisted upon waiting until the elephants came up, and then tracking the animal to his lair. A wounded tiger is not a pleasant creature to meet, the more so as you can never know when he may spring out upon you. Captain Ring was by far too old a hand at tiger-shooting, and had witnessed too many accidents, to be rash on these occasions. The mahouts, moreover, had been on the alert, and at the first sound of our firing had made towards the spot where we were, so that in less than a quarter of an hour after the tiger had departed we were after him.

The greatest possible caution was needful in moving through the now very thick jungle. Hassein seemed, however, from instinct, to know the direction the animal had taken, and very soon we could perceive every here and there large fresh drops of blood, showing that the beast had been badly hit, and indicating very plainly that the old fellow was right. But the vitality of tigers is something wonderful. Any kind of cat will live when he has gone through what would kill most animals. As we followed, Hassein, who was sitting behind me on my elephant, got more and more excited, and kept warning the party to look out, for the tiger could not be far off. Still it was a tail chase, and as every now and then we lost the trail, the animal had plenty of time to forge ahead. At last, a perfect scream from the old fellow behind made me turn round, and there he was frantically pointing to an almost perpendicular piece of rock, about six hundred yards to our right, up which the tiger was scrambling. A very few minutes brought us to the spot, but only to find that the wounded animal had taken refuge in a cave, the entrance of which was about twenty feet high, and perfectly inaccessible to a man, unless he crawled to it on his hands and knees.

Here, then, we held a council of war. To return to camp without the tiger for which we had worked so hard was out of the question; but it seemed still more impossible to ascend to the cave to put the poor brute out of his misery. We were well provided with fireworks, and these we now began to use, keeping up at the same time a fire into the cave, so as to force the tiger to break cover. That he was inside the place there could be no doubt, for every now and then we heard a suppressed growl, as if our bullets, although fired at random, had touched him. But after a time this ceased, and we began to think that some of our shots must have finished him. Still the risk of going up to the mouth of the cave, and looking in to see whether he was alive, was greater than any sane man would have encountered, and we were seriouly thinking of going back to camp, when all of a sudden an end was put to our doubts.

For some time Hassein had been getting more and more excited. At last he seemed almost frantic with rage, at the idea that the tiger would escape us. He roared out that he would ascend to the cave, and see for himself whether the brute was dead. In vain did Captain Ring and the rest of the party try to dissuade him—even to order him not to go. The old fellow's blood was up, and he would listen to nothing. He divested himself of every article of clothing, except a pair of short low drawers and

the linen skull-cap which he wore under his turban, and taking his large native hunting-knife in his mouth, so that both hands might be free, commenced to climb up the rock, whilst at a distance of thirty yards we sat on elephants, rifles ready cocked in hand, watching him.

The intense anxiety and excitement of the next five minutes I shall never forget. Again and again did we call upon the old fellow to come back, but he paid no attention. More than once, in trying to get up the steep rock, he slipped. At last he reached the small ledge in front of the cave, and putting aside the brushwood began to peep in. All at once, with a roar like thunder, the tiger sprang out, and, to us who were watching closely, the brute seemed merely to brush past old Hassein, and to put him aside as it sprang upon the ground below. It never paused for an instant.

As the tiger touched the earth, not ten yards from my elephant, a shot from Captain Ring's rifle turned it over stone dead. We observed that Hassein lay at the mouth of the cave, still on his knees, but with his head and the upper part of his body bent forward, as if he had received a severe blow, and was stunned by it. Two of the natives who were with us sprang up the rock to assist the old fellow down. Alas! they found that he was dead. His skull had been crushed just as an egg is chipped by an egg-spoon. The doctor who was with us said that his death must have been instantaneous, and this merely by the passing blow of the tiger's fore paw. There were no marks of scratches about the head; it was beaten in as if by a sledge-hammer.

We took the body back to camp, and the next day had it buried according to the usual Moslem rites at the nearest village. On inquiry, it was found that the poor old fellow had left a widow and two children. For them we raised, amongst those who had known Hassein, a subscription of three hundred pounds, which, being invested in house property at Meerut, gives his family twenty rupees, or two pounds sterling, a month, and is to them an ample fortune.

GEORGE SILVERMAN'S EXPLANATION.

By Charles Dickens.

IN NINE CHAPTERS. FIRST CHAPTER.

It happened in this wise:

—But, sitting with my pen in my hand looking at those words again, without descrying any hint in them of the words that should follow, it comes into my mind that they have an abrupt appearance. They may serve, however, if I let them remain, to suggest how very difficult I find it to begin to explain my Explanation. An uncouth phrase: and yet I do not see my way to a better.

SECOND CHAPTER.

It happened in *this* wise:

—But, looking at those words, and comparing them with my former opening, I find they are the self-same words repeated. This is the more surprising to me, because I employ them in quite a new connexion. For indeed I declare that my intention was to discard the commencement I first had in my thoughts, and to give the preference to another of an entirely different nature, dating my explanation from an anterior period of my life. I will make a third trial, without erasing this second failure, protesting that it is not my design to conceal any of my infirmities, whether they be of head or heart.

THIRD CHAPTER.

Not as yet directly aiming at how it came to pass, I will come upon it by degrees. The natural manner after all, for God knows that is how it came upon me!

My parents were in a miserable condition of life, and my infant home was a cellar in Preston. I recollect the sound of Father's Lancashire clogs on the street pavement above, as being different in my young hearing from the sound of all other clogs; and I recollect that when Mother came down the cellar-steps, I used tremblingly to speculate on her feet having a good or an ill tempered look—on her knees—on her waist—until finally her face came into view and settled the question. From this it will be seen that I was timid, and that the cellar-steps were steep, and that the doorway was very low.

Mother had the gripe and clutch of Poverty upon her face, upon her figure, and not least of all upon her voice. Her sharp and high-pitched words were squeezed out of her, as by the compression of bony fingers on a leathern bag, and she had a way of rolling her eyes about and about the cellar, as she scolded, that was gaunt and hungry. Father, with his shoulders rounded, would sit quiet on a three-legged stool, looking at the empty grate, until she would pluck the stool from under him, and bid him go bring some money home. Then he would dismally ascend the steps, and I, holding my ragged shirt and trousers together with a hand (my only braces), would feint and dodge from Mother's pursuing grasp at my hair.

A worldly little devil was Mother's usual name for me. Whether I cried for that I was in the dark, or for that it was cold, or for that I was hungry, or whether I squeezed myself into a warm corner when there was a fire, or ate voraciously when there was food, she would still say: "O you worldly little devil!" And the sting of it was, that I quite well knew myself to be a worldly little devil. Worldly as to wanting to be housed and warmed, worldly as to wanting to be fed, worldly as to the greed with which I inwardly compared how much I got of those good things with how much Father and Mother got, when, rarely, those good things were going.

Sometimes they both went away seeking work, and then I would be locked up in the cellar for a day or two at a time. I was at my worldliest then. Left alone, I yielded myself up to a worldly yearning for enough of anything (except misery), and for the death of Mother's father,

who was a machine-maker at Birmingham, and on whose decease I had heard Mother say she would come into a whole court-full of houses "if she had her rights." Worldly little devil, I would stand about, musingly fitting my cold bare feet into cracked bricks and crevices of the damp cellar-floor—walking over my grandfather's body, so to speak, into the court-full of houses, and selling them for meat and drink and clothes to wear.

At last a change came down into our cellar. The universal change came down even as low as that—so will it mount to any height on which a human creature can perch—and brought other changes with it.

We had a heap of I don't know what foul litter in the darkest corner, which we called "the bed." For three days Mother lay upon it without getting up, and then began at times to laugh. If I had ever heard her laugh before, it had been so seldom that the strange sound frightened me. It frightened Father, too, and we took it by turns to give her water. Then she began to move her head from side to side, and sing. After that, she getting no better, Father fell a-laughing and a-singing, and then there was only I to give them both water, and they both died.

FOURTH CHAPTER.

When I was lifted out of the cellar by two men, of whom one came peeping down alone first, and ran away and brought the other, I could hardly bear the light of the street. I was sitting in the roadway, blinking at it, and at a ring of people collected around me, but not close to me, when, true to my character of worldly little devil, I broke silence by saying, "I am hungry and thirsty!"

"Does he know they are dead?" asked one of another.

"Do you know your father and mother are both dead of fever?" asked a third of me, severely.

"I don't know what it is to be dead. I supposed it meant that, when the cup rattled against their teeth and the water spilt over them. I am hungry and thirsty." That was all I had to say about it.

The ring of people widened outward from the inner side as I looked around me; and I smelt vinegar, and what I now know to be camphor, thrown in towards where I sat. Presently some one put a great vessel of smoking vinegar on the ground near me, and then they all looked at me in silent horror as I ate and drank of what was brought for me. I knew at the time they had a horror of me, but I couldn't help it.

I was still eating and drinking, and a murmur of discussion had begun to arise respecting what was to be done with me next, when I heard a cracked voice somewhere in the ring say: "My name is Hawkyard, Mr. Verity Hawkyard, of West Bromwich." Then the ring split in one place, and a yellow-faced peak-nosed gentleman, clad all in iron-grey to his gaiters, pressed forward with a policeman and another official of some sort. He came forward close to the vessel of smoking vinegar; from which he sprinkled himself carefully, and me copiously.

"He had a grandfather at Birmingham, this young boy: who is just dead, too," said Mr. Hawkyard.

I turned my eyes upon the speaker, and said in a ravening manner: "Where's his houses?"

"Hah! Horrible worldliness on the edge of the grave," said Mr. Hawkyard, casting more of the vinegar over me, as if to get my devil out of me. "I have undertaken a slight—a ve-ry slight—trust in behalf of this boy; quite a voluntary trust; a matter of mere honour, if not of mere sentiment; still I have taken it upon myself, and it shall be (O yes, it shall be!) discharged."

The bystanders seemed to form an opinion of this gentleman, much more favourable than their opinion of me.

"He shall be taught," said Mr. Hawkyard "(O yes, he shall be taught!); but what is to be done with him for the present? He may be infected. He may disseminate infection." The ring widened considerably. "What is to be done with him?"

He held some talk with the two officials. I could distinguish no word save "Farm-house." There was another sound several times repeated, which was wholly meaningless in my ears then, but which I knew soon afterwards to be "Hoghton Towers."

"Yes," said Mr. Hawkyard, "I think that sounds promising. I think that sounds hopeful. And he can be put by himself in a Ward, for a night or two, you say?"

It seemed to be the police-officer who had said so, for it was he who replied Yes. It was he, too, who finally took me by the arm and walked me before him through the streets, into a whitewashed room in a bare building, where I had a chair to sit in, a table to sit at, an iron bedstead and good mattress to lie upon, and a rug and blanket to cover me. Where I had enough to eat, too, and was shown how to clean the tin porringer in which it was conveyed to me, until it was as good as a looking-glass. Here, likewise, I was put in a bath, and had new clothes brought to me, and my old rags were burnt, and I was camphored and vinegared, and disinfected in a variety of ways.

When all this was done—I don't know in how many days or how few, but it matters not—Mr. Hawkyard stepped in at the door, remaining close to it, and said:

"Go and stand against the opposite wall, George Silverman. As far off as you can. That'll do. How do you feel?"

I told him that I didn't feel cold, and didn't feel hungry, and didn't feel thirsty. That was the whole round of human feelings, as far as I knew, except the pain of being beaten.

"Well," said he, "you are going, George, to a healthy farm-house to be purified. Keep in the air there, as much as you can. Live an out-of-door life there, until you are fetched away. You had better not say much—in fact, you had better be very careful not to say anything—about what your parents died of, or they might not

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like to take you in. Behave well, and I'll put you to school (O yes, I'll put you to school!), though I am not obligated to do it. I am a servant of the Lord, George, and I have been a good servant to him (I have!) these five-and-thirty years. The Lord has had a good servant in me, and he knows it."

What I then supposed him to mean by this, I cannot imagine. As little do I know when I began to comprehend that he was a prominent member of some obscure denomination or congregation, every member of which held forth to the rest when so inclined, and among whom he was called Brother Hawkyard. It was enough for me to know, on that day in the Ward, that the farmer's cart was waiting for me at the street corner. I was not slow to get into it, for it was the first ride I ever had in my life.

It made me sleepy, and I slept. First, I stared at Preston streets as long as they lasted, and, meanwhile, I may have had some small dumb wondering within me whereabouts our cellar was. But I doubt it. Such a worldly little devil was I, that I took no thought who would bury Father and Mother, or where they would be buried, or when. The question whether the eating and drinking by day, and the covering by night, would be as good at the farm-house as at the Ward, superseded those questions.

The jolting of the cart on a loose stony road awoke me, and I found that we were mounting a steep hill, where the road was a rutty by-road through a field. And so, by fragments of an ancient terrace, and by some rugged outbuildings that had once been fortified, and passing under a ruined gateway, we came to the old farm-house in the thick stone wall outside the old quadrangle of Hoghton Towers. Which I looked at, like a stupid savage; seeing no speciality in; seeing no antiquity in; assuming all farm-houses to resemble it; assigning the decay I noticed, to the one potent cause of all ruin that I knew—Poverty; eyeing the pigeons in their flights, the cattle in their stalls, the ducks in the pond, and the fowls pecking about the yard, with a hungry hope that plenty of them might be killed for dinner while I stayed there; wondering whether the scrubbed dairy vessels drying in the sunlight could be the goodly porringers out of which the master ate his belly-filling food, and which he polished when he had done, according to my Ward experience; shrinkingly doubtful whether the shadows passing over that airy height on the bright spring day were not something in the nature of frowns; sordid, afraid, unadmiring, a small Brute to shudder at.

To that time I had never had the faintest impression of beauty. I had had no knowledge whatever that there was anything lovely in this life. When I had occasionally slunk up the cellar-steps into the street and glared in at shop-windows, I had done so with no higher feelings than we may suppose to animate a mangey young dog or wolf-cub. It is equally the fact that I had never been alone, in the sense of holding unselfish converse with myself. I had been solitary often enough, but nothing better.

Such was my condition when I sat down to my dinner, that day, in the kitchen of the old farm-house. Such was my condition when I lay on my bed in the old farm-house that night, stretched out opposite the narrow mullioned window, in the cold light of the moon, like a young Vampire.

FIFTH CHAPTER.

What do I know, now, of Hoghton Towers? Very little, for I have been gratefully unwilling to disturb my first impressions. A house, centuries old, on high ground a mile or so removed from the road between Preston and Blackburn, where the first James of England in his hurry to make money by making Baronets, perhaps, made some of those remunerative dignitaries. A house, centuries old, deserted and falling to pieces, its woods and gardens long since grass land or ploughed up, the rivers Ribble and Darwen glancing below it, and a vague haze of smoke against which not even the supernatural prescience of the first Stuart could foresee a Counterblast, hinting at Steam Power, powerful in two distances.

What did I know, then, of Hoghton Towers? When I first peeped in at the gate of the lifeless quadrangle, and started from the mouldering statue becoming visible to me like its Guardian Ghost; when I stole round by the back of the farm-house and got in among the ancient rooms, many of them with their floors and ceilings falling, the beams and rafters hanging dangerously down, the plaster dropping as I trod, the oaken panels stripped away, the windows half walled up, half broken; when I discovered a gallery commanding the old kitchen, and looked down between balustrades upon a massive old table and benches, fearing to see I know not what dead-alive creatures come in and seat themselves and look up with I know not what dreadful eyes, or lack of eyes, at me; when all over the house I was awed by gaps and chinks where the sky stared sorrowfully at me, where the birds passed, and the ivy rustled, and the stains of winter weather blotched the rotten floors; when down at the bottom of dark pits of staircase into which the stairs had sunk, green leaves trembled, butterflies fluttered, and bees hummed in and out through the broken doorways; when encircling the whole ruin were sweet scents and sights of fresh green growth and ever-renewing life, that I had never dreamed of;—I say, when I passed into such clouded perception of these things as my dark soul could compass, what did I know then of Hoghton Towers?

I have written that the sky stared sorrowfully at me. Therein have I anticipated the answer. I knew that all these things looked sorrowfully at me. That they seemed to sigh or whisper, not without pity for me: "Alas! poor worldly little devil!"

There were two or three rats at the bottom of one of the smaller pits of broken staircase when I craned over and looked in. They were scuffling for some prey that was there. And when

they started and hid themselves, close together in the dark, I thought of the old life (it had grown old already) in the cellar.

How not to be this worldly little devil? How not to have a repugnance towards myself as I had towards the rats? I hid in a corner of one of the smaller chambers, frightened at myself and crying (it was the first time I had ever cried for any cause not purely physical), and I tried to think about it. One of the farm-ploughs came into my range of view just then, and it seemed to help me as it went on with its two horses up and down the field so peacefully and quietly.

There was a girl of about my own age in the farm-house family, and she sat opposite to me at the narrow table at meal-times. It had come into my mind at our first dinner, that she might take the fever from me. The thought had not disquieted me then; I had only speculated how she would look under the altered circumstances, and whether she would die. But it came into my mind now, that I might try to prevent her taking the fever, by keeping away from her. I knew I should have but scrambling board, if I did; so much the less worldly and less devilish the deed would be, I thought.

From that hour I withdrew myself at early morning into secret corners of the ruined house, and remained hidden there until she went to bed. At first, when meals were ready, I used to hear them calling me; and then my resolution weakened. But I strengthened it again, by going further off into the ruin and getting out of hearing. I often watched for her at the dim windows; and, when I saw that she was fresh and rosy, felt much happier.

Out of this holding her in my thoughts, to the humanising of myself, I suppose some childish love arose within me. I felt in some sort dignified by the pride of protecting her, by the pride of making the sacrifice for her. As my heart swelled with that new feeling, it insensibly softened about Mother and Father. It seemed to have been frozen before, and now to be thawed. The old ruin and all the lovely things that haunted it were not sorrowful for me only, but sorrowful for Mother and Father as well. Therefore did I cry again, and often too.

The farm-house family conceived me to be of a morose temper, and were very short with me: though they never stinted me in such broken fare as was to be got, out of regular hours. One night when I lifted the kitchen latch at my usual time, Sylvia (that was her pretty name) had but just gone out of the room. Seeing her ascending the opposite stairs, I stood still at the door. She had heard the clink of the latch, and looked round.

"George," she called to me, in a pleased voice: "to-morrow is my birthday, and we are to have a fiddler, and there's a party of boys and girls coming in a cart, and we shall dance. I invite you. Be sociable for once, George."

"I am very sorry, miss," I answered, "but I——but no; I can't come."

"You are a disagreeable, ill-humoured lad," she returned, disdainfully, "and I ought not to have asked you. I shall never speak to you again."

As I stood with my eyes fixed on the fire after she was gone, I felt that the farmer bent his brows upon me.

"Eh, lad," said he, "Sylvy's right. You're as moody and broody a lad as never I set eyes on yet!"

I tried to assure him that I meant no harm; but he only said, coldly: "Maybe not, maybe not. There! Get thy supper, get thy supper, and then thou canst sulk to thy heart's content again."

Ah! If they could have seen me next day in the ruin, watching for the arrival of the cart full of merry young guests; if they could have seen me at night, gliding out from behind the ghostly statue, listening to the music and the fall of dancing feet, and watching the lighted farm-house windows from the quadrangle when all the ruin was dark; if they could have read my heart as I crept up to bed by the back way, comforting myself with the reflection, "They will take no hurt from me;" they would not have thought mine a morose or an unsocial nature!

It was in these ways that I began to form a shy disposition; to be of a timidly silent character under misconstruction; to have an inexpressible, perhaps a morbid, dread of ever being sordid or worldly. It was in these ways that my nature came to shape itself to such a mould, even before it was affected by the influences of the studious and retired life of a poor scholar.

A "SEAT" OF THEATRICALS.

When I was at school, I used to learn out of a geography-book that such and such towns were the "seats" of this or that trade. When Leeds was flung at me interrogatively from the magisterial desk, I, having faithfully learned my lesson, promptly replied, "A town in Yorkshire, a great seat of the woollen trade." I wondered vaguely what sort of a seat Leeds was, and how the woollen trade sat down upon it.

I forget what the geography-book said Liverpool was, but if, after personal observation of the town, on various occasions, the question were put to me, I should answer, "Liverpool, town in Lancashire, a great seat of theatricals." I have been many times in Liverpool; but I cannot call to mind that I ever went there without, on the evening of my arrival, making the round of the theatres, and finding myself, immediately after breakfast on the following morning, standing on the stage of one or other of them, witnessing a rehearsal. The rest of the day has generally been spent in lunching with one manager, dining with a second, and supping with a third. Seeing Liverpool through this "medium," witnessing scenes of three or four different pieces performed by as many separate and distinct companies in one night, viewing, in my

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rapid passage from one theatre to another, flaming playbills on every adjacent wall, listening all day to tales of past theatrical successes and brilliant theatrical projects for the future, I have come to regard Liverpool as a town where the energies of the people are wholly absorbed in theatricals, where the inhabitants are divided into two classes—those who get up and act plays, and those who go to see them.

When I enter my hotel, I feel that I am merely entering it to dress for the theatre. When I encounter in the street waggons laden with cotton, I have no other idea in connexion with the soft white raw material protruding from the bales, except that it has been grown, and is now about to be spun and woven into a fabric, expressly to form drops, and "clothes," and wings, and sky-borders, and green banks, and sea-pieces for the theatres. When I see people coming down in the morning on omnibuses, I conceive that they are all going to rehearsal. When, taking a walk in Bold-street, I notice that there are shops of all kinds there, doing a brisk business, the same notion pursues me. The laces, and flowers, and gloves, and boots those ladies are buying, what can they be for, but to be worn at the theatre? Why are those gentlemen buying shirts, and neckties, and patent-leather boots? That they may shine in the stalls. Gibus hats are being bought, to be folded up in private boxes; bonbons, to be munched in dress circles. And can there be a doubt that tea and sugar, eggs and bacon, are going off to satisfy the cravings of those who desire a comfortable meal before proceeding to the pit? The toy-shop does not put me out at all. How are the children to be amused until it be time to go to the play? Nor does the stationer's. How is a man to write for orders without paper, pens, and ink? Nor does the waterproofer's. If any of the male inhabitants, having business in Birkenhead—in connexion with the new theatre there—were to cross the Mersey in such a wet day as this—and it is always wet in Liverpool—without a mackintosh or a patent symphonia, they would assuredly catch cold and be unable to go to the theatre on their return. And why do those tradesmen, those mercers, and lacemen, and glovers, and tailors, and hatters, and grocers, and the rest, stand all day behind counters and sell their wares? Why! That they may earn money to pay for places at the theatre, that they may "have the evening" to enjoy the representation of the works of Shakespeare and other more or less—on the whole, less—immortal dramatic bards.

Liverpool was my first baiting-place on my autumnal ride for the Health Cup. I intended merely to rub down, bait, sleep, and start again; but I had scarcely begun to rub down when the ostler—waiter, I mean—brought me a card. On it was inscribed the name of one of the Liverpool "managers."

I pause here to remark that the word manager, when it stands alone, is universally accepted as meaning the conductor of a theatre. There are managers of banks, and firms, and railways, and works of all kinds; but when you say *a* manager, *a* becomes for the nonce a definite article, and you mean the great man who is sole lessee and director of a temple of the drama. And it may be remarked that the manager generally comports himself in his temple as if he were the god of it. After the queen, I know no individual in the state who enjoys so high and unapproachable a position as the manager of a theatre. Write to the prime minister, seated in Downing-street, managing that vast empire on which the sun never sets, and by return of post you will receive from his secretary a courteous reply, perhaps not accepting your farce—I mean your scheme for the extinction of the national debt—but at least acknowledging your favour. Write to a manager of a theatre, governing a world comprised within four dingy brick walls, and having for his subjects—over whom he rules despotically—a leading man, a leading lady, a singing chambermaid, a low comedian, six or eight male and female general utilities, a dozen supers at a shilling a night, a prompter, and a mangy bear of a doorkeeper—write to this mighty potentate, and you are treated with the silence and contempt which are due to your audacity and presumption. Being a disappointed dramatic author—all dramatic authors are disappointed—I hold these views with regard to managers as a matter of course. Injury is the badge of all our tribe. What if they have accepted my farces? they have rejected my tragedies; what if they have accepted my tragedies? they have declined to give me my price. Judge, then, of my wonder and surprise when I, who had been so often sent away, with a rejected manuscript, from the stage-door, who had written so many letters destined never to be answered, was actually waited upon by a manager, coming to me frankly and fearlessly of his own accord. I was beginning to think it a most extraordinary circumstance, when I suddenly remembered that the manager waiting below was a provincial one, that he was a dramatic author, and that he was new to his dignity. As a provincial manager, he might have some respect for an author, not because he was an author, but because he was fresh from London; as an author himself, he might have some fellow-feeling, though I have observed that that soon wears off; and as having only recently become a manager, it was not to be expected that he should yet know to the full extent what was due to him.

However, there he was at the foot of the stairs, smiling and extending a friendly hand. The proceeding was altogether so unsophisticated, that I could scarcely forbear giving him a bit of advice. I was just about to say to him, "My dear sir, this is most imprudent of you—most dangerous. You should never, now that you are a manager, call upon an author. You put yourself at a disadvantage by so doing. What if at this friendly moment the fellow should, from his breast-pocket, produce a piece? At an hotel, too, where you might

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be inveigled into partaking of the flowing bowl, there is no knowing but that under the generous influence of liquor you might 'see' that notion of his and accept it." Further, I would have said, "When you see an author—if you ever should consent to see one—give him an interview in your own business-room, and don't have a fire. Chill him by cold words, an empty grate, and the sight of a cartload of rejected manuscripts." If I refrained from giving my young friend this lecture, it was in the belief that he would learn it all from experience in due time.

"Come and see my theatre," he said, when the greetings were over.

"With all heart," I replied, and away we went.

How eagerly, with what a quick step, he led me to the well-remembered place! Anxious, I see, to show me the wonders of his world. I quite envy him as he skips up the box-stairs, past money and check takers, without pausing either to pay or to parley. Fancy bouncing into a theatre that way, all the officials clearing out of your path and touching their hats to you! The money-taker is a little doubtful about me, until my friend, the manager, gives him a nod, when he lets me pass, somewhat sulkily, as if he felt it was not right to let everybody bounce up the stairs in that fashion. My friend takes a great bunch of keys from his pocket—the keys of those gates of Delight, the private boxes, and the private door through to the stage—that mysterious little closed portal which we meaner mortals gaze at with so much awe when we pass down to the stalls. I begin to regard my friend as a sort of St. Peter.

He takes me into the manager's box—sacred place—and bids me look at the—not the stage, the pride of the manager is upon him now—at the house. "Look, look," he says, "at the gallery—at the pit—at the boxes—at the stalls." A brave "house" truly, a sight to do a manager's heart good. But, dear, dear, how our notions change! I have known the time when my friend had no eyes but for the stage. Now he turns his back to the stage, and gazes with beaming eyes upon the "house;" upon those unwashed noisy boys in the gallery. In other times, when he was a dramatic author pure and simple—very simple—he would have cursed those noisy gallery boys. But now he doesn't mind their noise at all; he is thinking of their sixpences.

When I am permitted to look at the stage, I see a performance quite up to the London mark in all its leading features. The scenery, dresses, properties, and appointments strike me as being superior to the general run of such things in the great centre. But, just as I am getting interested in the play, I am hurried away to see another theatre. If I were not being hurried along so, I am sure I should be struck with awe. Just fancy holding the keys—*all* the keys—of two theatres. I am gasping out in an apostrophe to my friend, "Great Being," when he opens the door of the manager's box, pushes me in and says:

"Look at the house! look at the gallery! look at the pit! look at the boxes!" He cannot say, look at the stalls, for there are none; but I notice that he always begins with the gallery first. O ye gods, seated in the worst seats, placed at the greatest distance from the stage, offensively kept in awe by policemen, insulted by printed intimations not to whistle and crack nuts—did ye but know your value, your virtue in the eyes of the manager! Hereditary bondsmen, know ye not that you are the thews and sinews of the theatrical land; that ye are the mainstay and support of the state dramatic; that in your dirty shirt-sleeves, with all your nut-cracking, and whistling, and "up with them borders," ye are more loved by the manager than all those genteel people in the upper boxes, with opera-cloaks and white kid gloves, aye, better than a good many of the genteel people in the stalls and dress circle? They come in with orders; ye pay your sixpences like men—nay, like gods, as ye are. As regards theatricals in the kingdom of Coin, Sixpence is King.

I *do* look at the gallery, at the pit, at the boxes. A crowded house is at all times an exhilarating spectacle, even when you are not interested in the sixpences. It is well known that actors are depressed by a poor attendance. They say they act better when the house is full. We, spectators, can readily understand this; for is not our enjoyment of a play enhanced when we are among many? On the other hand, we all know how poor and cold the performance seems when the audience is thin. I believe in animal magnetism and electro-biology so far; there is a vivifying power in a multitude of eyes and animated faces. The sight acts as a stimulant. Try it, one of these pantomime nights, from the boxes of Drury Lane or Covent Garden. They cannot present you with anything half as wonderful on the stage side of the house.

My young friend, philosopher, guide, and manager has yet another theatre, which also owns him lord, to show me. We don't want a cab; all the three theatres are within a stone's throw of each other. A light-comedy skip or two across the flags, and we enter a covered carriage-way, leading to the principal entrances. No one shall ever get wet here waiting for a cab or carriage. Through the entrance-hall, up a flight of stone stairs, and I found myself in a noble saloon—not a place made flashy by mirrors and gilding, but a handsome apartment, designed, decorated, and furnished in the best taste. The doors and panels are chastely inlaid; the huge marble fireplace is a work of art, not of mere masonry; the carpet and hangings are of the richest materials. I want to linger here to wonder and admire; but I am dragged on to view the house.

Another bunch of keys. The third! Mercy on us! How is it that my young friend is still here on earth? How is it that he has not gone up, balloon-like, and settled in the seventh heaven, a constellation for all men to admire at

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the respectful distance of several millions of miles? Once more I am taken into the manager's box. The third manager's box, but the same manager. Once more—the third time of asking—he bids me look at the house, look at the gallery, look at the boxes, look at the stalls. He does not bid me look at the pit; for it is a peculiarity of this new theatre that it has no pit. The whole of the ground-floor is occupied by stalls, and those who usually occupy the pit are put into a large amphitheatre immediately above the dress circle, and immediately under the gallery. Before I make any remark upon this arrangement, I must give vent to the feeling of delight and surprise with which a look at the new house immediately inspired me. I thought it was the most comfortable, the most elegant, the most luxuriously appointed theatre I had ever seen. Everything had been done with the most lavish hand to secure two things—comfort and elegance in the front of the house. It has often struck me as being very odd that managers of theatres should expect their fashionable and aristocratic visitors in stalls and private boxes to be content with sitting accommodation considerably inferior to that which is to be found in a penny ice-shop—muslin curtains of the very commonest quality, scraps of imitation tapestry carpet of the thinnest and cheapest description, narrow uncomfortable chairs, covered with American leather cloth, and triumphantly decorated with vulgar broad-headed brass nails. Society never comes in contact with such mean things anywhere else. It never touches, it never sees, such a cold, shabby, miserable thing as painted cotton—mockingly called leather—except in the theatre. This new theatre, at Liverpool, has evidently been designed and furnished to afford to its visitors in the best places all the comfort, elegance, and refinement which they are accustomed to in their own drawing-rooms. At the back of the dress circle there is a wide open promenade (in sight of the stage) softly carpeted, and in the centre of this promenade there is a large fireplace, enclosed in a magnificent frame of pure white marble. The stalls are furnished in the same manner. The carpet and the chairs are worthy of a palace. The private boxes are dainty little boudoirs, so dainty that you might imagine they were designed for ladies only. The refreshment and retiring rooms are commodious and elegant, and all the passages leading to them are richly carpeted.

This elegant and comfortable theatre is the outcome of a great theatrical revival in Liverpool. The revival began about five years ago. Previous to that time there were only two recognised theatres in the town. There was a notion that Liverpool could scarcely support two theatres. The drama was in this dull and stagnant state, having greatly fallen away from the activity of former years, when a gentleman arrived from Australia with new ideas and new experience of theatrical affairs. This gentleman, casting eyes upon a desolate lecture-hall, resolved, madly as everybody believed, to turn it into a theatre for the performance of vaudevilles, burlesques, and farces. With astonishing energy, and in an astonishingly short space of time, he accomplished the task which he had set himself; and the public, on the night of opening, going in sparsely and doubtfully, found, to their delight and surprise, in the place of the dingy desolate hall, a smart, bright, cheerful little theatre. The enterprise of the manager developed as time went on. He attracted to his little theatre all the travelling stars in succession. He gave his patrons comedy and drama, as well as burlesques; he even had the courage to produce new pieces by London authors. He set the example of doing things well; and those who imitated his policy in other provincial towns speedily found their reward.

The elegance and comfort of the new theatre, while fulfilling the prime object which its builders had in view, are, oddly enough, in certain quarters a subject of complaint. Stars complain that room is wasted, and that the theatre might be made to hold a great many more persons—that is to say, pounds sterling. Actors generally hold that audiences enjoy a play more when they are crowded and uncomfortable than when they have plenty of space. When they have ample elbow-room, and can lie back and stretch out their legs, they give themselves up to lazy ease, and don't trouble themselves to applaud. Another special cause of complaint is the arrangement which devotes the whole of the ground area to the cold genteel stall people, and relegates the warm impulsive pitites to a distant region above-stairs. Both parties are dissatisfied. The actors long to be near the pit, and the pit longs to be near the actors. They know how to appreciate each other; but, being so far separated, a coldness ensues which is particularly depressing to the occupants of the stage, the breath of whose nostrils is applause.

When, at half-past ten o'clock, I parted from my enterprising young friend, he heaved a deep sigh. I understood what it meant. He sighed because he had no more theatres to show me.

CHILDREN'S PARTIES.

The influence of blood in animals is not to be denied. You cannot make a racer out of the colt of a cart-horse; but I question sometimes if this applies to the superior animal, man. Here are two babies, swaddled in dainty clothes, as it befits all babies to be. The one is the child of a princess, the other is the child of a washerwoman. Come, tell me which is which? Look into the eyes of both children. They are equally bright, equally blue, or black, or grey, as the case may be—little clear windows both, of pure little souls within, looking out wonderingly upon a world of sin and sorrow as yet unknown. Would you not think they had been cast in the same delicate mould? In this world of toil you know what the hard-working hand becomes—broad, rough, rugged, an ugly mass of strength, with not a line of beauty left. But look at the hand of this common child, whose

destiny it may be to wield the hammer or the spade. Could anything be more delicate, more beautiful? Which is the royal hand, which the plebeian? You cannot tell. Both have the same pretty little nails, both the same dimples at the finger-joints. How beautiful are the feet of a child! Mothers show them with pride, and smother them with kisses. When feet grow old, and have trodden the weary earth, they are shown no more. It is only when they are young that they are beautiful. Pity that it is not the fashion to hide faces when they grow old. I do not mean with years, but in worldliness; when the sweet mouth begins to express bitterness, and the tender eye to gleam with the fire of evil passions.

It is not until they grow up that the difference between the princess's baby and the washerwoman's baby becomes apparent. The former grows to be a fine gentleman or an elegant lady, distinguished by a delicate skin, by white well-formed hands, by an easy or graceful carriage; the latter develops into a slouching, horny-handed, brown-skinned navvy, or an ungraceful, ungainly wench. I cannot believe that even one-half of this difference is owing to blood. It is culture in the one case, and the want of culture in the other.

This dissertation brings me to the subject which gives its title to the present article. I have had the privilege to be present this season at three juvenile parties, representing three different grades in society; and I have found a perfect equality of attraction at all. One was given by a very grand lady, in a very grand mansion at the west-end; the second came off in the comfortable but unfashionable region of Camden-town; and the third took place in a paved court near Holborn. No less than two hundred juveniles were present at the first-named entertainment. It was a wet night, and when I arrived I found two stalwart policemen engaged in carrying fairy-like little girls up the wet steps of the grand portico. It was a strange sight. I had often seen policemen dragging away dirty ragged children to the workhouse or the station; but here they were, those rough men, in their rough blue suits, carrying in their arms the curled little darlings of the aristocracy, assisting them up-stairs, that they might not soil their dainty shoes. It was such a grotesque idea as might have entered the mind of a pantomime writer—a scene where the evil genii (though they were good genii, these men in blue) came in the shape of policemen and carried away the good fairies.

Ah, what a sight was presented in that grand saloon when all the two hundred children were on the floor together, dancing a quadrille! There were a great many little girls with flaxen hair, combed out into a feathery fleece of gold. Dressed in white, with pink and blue sashes, they looked like animated chimney-ornaments. It was a hard matter to refrain from taking them up in one's arms and kissing them, they were so sweetly and innocently pretty. The innocence of one young lady of seven years will scarcely be credited by those worldlings who affect to see corruption in the very cradle. Her papa, pointing to a boy in a knickerbocker suit of black velvet, said, "That young gentleman is a marquis, my dear." The little innocent looked up wonderingly in his face and said, "What is a marquis, papa?" And when her papa explained that a marquis was a lord, the son of a duke, and asked her if she would like to dance with the young marquis, she said, "No, she was engaged for the next three dances to her cousin Tommy." Now Tommy's father was a plain Mister, with no handle to his name but Q.C. That young lady will know what a marquis is by-and-by, I suppose, and will like to dance with him—if she ever have the chance again—better than with the son of a Q.C. But she is in the full sweetness of her beauty now, when she does not know what a marquis is.

I noticed many little couples making love; and the younger they were, the more they seemed to be absorbed by the tender feeling. The big boys were slightly supercilious to the little girls. In the ball-room, I saw them lifting their eyes to the young women; in the refreshment-room, they turned with contempt from the weak negus and cakes, and I heard one of them ask a footman for a glass of sherry. I dare say that youth had begun to smoke, and to despise the companionship of his mother and sisters. He will come back to their loving bosoms again, when he has realised his dream of manhood and found it a vain thing.

My second juvenile party, in Camden-town, took place at the house of a lady, where I am in the habit of dropping in, in a friendly way, at any time. I was privileged to see the preparations. When I called two days before the event, Cicy came running to meet me at the gate, dancing and clapping her hands and crying out: "Oh, Mitter Timpson, mamma's going to have a jubenile party, and she's making such lots of pies and puddings and custards." And Cicy had been assisting, I could see; for her little nose was delicately tipped with custard. I found Lily, and Herbert, and Harry, and Franky all in the wildest state of excitement about the "jubenile party." There was no keeping them in the nursery; at every opportunity they made their escape and rushed tumultuously into the kitchen, where their mamma—a sensible lady who distrusts pastrycooks and likes to give her guests wholesome food—was preparing the good things with her own fair hands. The nurse said that not one of them had slept a wink for three nights, nor had she herself been able to sleep for their chatter, which was all about their dresses, the partners they should choose, the comparative merits of ginger and black-currant wine, and the cruelty of being sent to bed without being allowed to share in the supper provided for the grown-up folks.

For days beforehand a similar state of excitement and expectation prevailed in the nurseries of several houses in the neighbourhood, where Cicy's guests were counting the hours until the party-night. Two score of hearts beat happily

at the prospect of a dance and a feast of cake and British wine. All went merry as a marriage bell at Cicy's party, until the knocker proclaimed that the flys had come to take the young people home. Then I saw that certain young ladies and gentlemen were loth to part. Poor Cicy's pleasure had been greater in the anticipation than in the realisation. Her sweetheart, Willy, had behaved disdainfully to her. Willy is an only son, who is much petted by his parents, and, since Cicy had last seen him, he had attained to the dignity of a jacket. He had also got a ring, a watch and chain, and a card-case containing little cards engraved with his little name prefixed by "Mr." Cicy had looked at him with longing eyes all the evening, and by many innocent wiles tried to coax him to dance with her. But "Mr. William" looked down upon Cicy, and over her little golden head, and away from her; and at last I saw Cicy sitting in a corner, with her eyes wide open and full of tears, which, I saw, were welling up from the very depths of her innocent heart. "Mr. William," I am happy to say, was punished. His parents are fond of showing him off, and they have taught young hopeful to give a recitation, which is generally received with much applause. But on this occasion no one asked "Mr. William" to give his recitation, and, though he was dying to perform, he could not find an opportunity of doing so. It was wonderful to meet our old friend Retribution, in this way, at a child's party, and to find him still nimble enough to overtake a boy!

The third juvenile festival I have referred to may be described as a court ball; for it was entirely a dancing-party, and was given, as I have said, in a paved court near Holborn. I was not invited: I invited myself. I had been in the habit of taking a short cut to some chambers in Lincoln's-inn, and had frequently noticed little girls dancing in a side court to the music of a barrel organ. The promoter of these dancing-parties, I found, was one Jemima Iggins, a tidy sprightly girl of about ten years old. I think she was entitled to an H in her patronymic; but she was called Iggins, and as she did not dispute the name in that form, it is not for me to do so. Jemima Iggins was, so to speak, Queen of this Court, and her Lord Chamberlain was a ragged boy, named Johnny Smith. Jemima's courtiers were chiefly young ladies, for the most part dressed in print frocks, somewhat ragged, and not over clean, and stout lace-up nailed boots. Jemima's balls took place, I was informed, almost every evening in the summer, when the weather was fine. The full band was concentrated in the person of an Italian organ-grinder, and his honorarium was one penny—generally paid in farthings, as taxes, by Queen Jemima's subjects.

The ball entirely depended upon the state of the court treasury. The organ-grinder was in the habit of looking in every evening, and making inquiring grins of any of the young ladies who happened to be in attendance. The treasury was immediately inspected, and if a levy of two halfpence, or four farthings, could be made, the Italian was invited to enter, when he at once unshouldered his organ and began to play. I seldom saw any boys joining in these dances. The girls danced among themselves—not quadrilles, but a kind of reel, in which they all did the same jiggling step, varied occasionally by a waltz or a polka. The boys were not at all in request. When they attempted to dance, they failed signally, and the girls were glad to get rid of them. Flirtation was not the object here; it was dancing; and I never saw dancing entered into with so much earnestness, or so thoroughly enjoyed. It was not boisterous dancing, by any means. My young friends in Curzon-street, or even those in Camden-town, might not call it genteel; but it was meant to be. It was evident that those poor girls, while dancing for their own enjoyment, were also dancing to attract the admiration of the spectators. They were doing their best, in their own fashion, to give a reading, so to speak, of the poetry of motion. It was, indeed, a very humble proceeding, dancing in a dirty court, under the open smoky sky of a great city, to the music of a barrel organ, ground by an Italian ragamuffin from Saffron-hill; but to me it was a pleasing, cheerful scene. The girls had made themselves as clean and tidy as possible for the occasion. No attentive observer could fail to perceive that, while dancing, they all made a point of standing very stiffly upon the proprieties. I could not help mentally exclaiming, "How slight is the difference between you and those who are called young ladies!" It is a mere matter of frock and manner. I believe you can make a lady out of any healthy, well-formed, well-disposed girl, if you only catch her young enough; and I shall live and die in the conviction that Jemima is a born lady.

THE DEAR GIRL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," &c.

CHAPTER XXXVI. UNINVITED GUESTS.

MR. DACRES enjoyed himself vastly, fanning his face with his handkerchief, and performing quadrilles with all the agility of a "four-year old." He was going to dance with some "Miss Mary," when he felt a hand on his arm, and a gentleman standing before him said, with cheerful recognition:

"Mr. Dacres?"

"My dear sir, how do you do?"

"You remember me, don't you?"

"Well, now that you ask me, I can't say exactly——What? Not Sir John Trotter?" said Dacres, becoming haughty, suddenly recollecting that he had been "injured in a nice point" by that gentleman.

"I've been wanting you at Trotterstown, and have been intending to write to you every day."

"Oh! indeed, Sir John," said Dacres, soften-

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ing. "Here, Lulu, pet, come over, dear. Here's Sir John Trotter, of whom you've heard me speak many and many a time."

This he added with a sort of pathos; and Lucy said, smiling: "Oh, yes!"

"My son is getting quite well again," said Sir John, "thanks be to the Lord! So now I have time to look about me. I am on my way to see him at Paris. I got all your messages by your kind friend, Mr. West."

"By my friend, West?" repeated Mr. Dacres, wonderingly.

"Yes!—when he visited me about you."

"Oh! true, true," said Mr. Dacres, with a readiness he had picked up in court; "to be sure. That time he went to you. And I am glad you found him satisfactory."

"You couldn't have chosen a warmer ambassador. He said everything he could, for he saw I was a little put out, you know. He said you would write, and I was surprised at not hearing from you."

Lucy was listening, wondering, and with something like a pang at her heart. Poor West! This was generous and noble, indeed!

The mayor and the distinguished guests, all round the amiable host, were complimenting, smiling, bowing. It was near midnight, when one of the servants, coming up to Beaufort, put a note into his hand.

"Not too late to ask for an invitation, I see," said the mayor, smiling, to Mr. Guernsey Beaufort, whose anxious, worn face was turned to the note. He saw a look of trouble in his face, and, in a moment, up came Mr. Blacker, express, pushing his way through.

"See here, Mr. Beaufort, could you spare us a few minutes?—a most important matter;" and he took him by the arm, and whispered in his important way.

Captain Filby was close by, and felt that an enormous screw was loose. He followed them cautiously. Presently he reported thus: "I kept my eye on 'em, and, just at the door, saw that new man, Morton, and his friend the judge's son, come up, and our respected clergyman, and the consul, sir, was with them." The gentlemen newly arrived were in their travelling dresses, with the wondering consul and clergyman invited by them to be present; and one of the travellers, stepping forward, said calmly, "I have asked you to come in here to put a simple question."

"I don't understand this proceeding at all," said Mr. Guernsey Beaufort, a little wildly.

"It is for your own advantage," said the other, "and, if you prefer it, we will go back and put it before all the room. No; you would not like that."

"I don't understand this business, either," said the consul. "Mr. Guernsey Beaufort is our host, and as enterprising and as liberal——"

"Ah!" said the other, looking the host hard in the face; "that brings me to the question I would ask. Do you still maintain you are Mr. Guernsey Beaufort, of Beaufort Manor?"

"I never said that. We are of the same family—the same Beauforts——"

"Good gracious!" said Mr. Blacker. "Why, you distinctly told me you were, and invited me *to* Beaufort Manor."

"I have been there often," said Mr. Beaufort, hurriedly; "and I know the place well, for my wife was a Beaufort. Yes; and we *are* of the same family."

"You are not," said Mr. Morton, promptly. "I may tell these gentlemen I am Mr. Guernsey Beaufort, of Beaufort Manor, who have travelled over to expose this person."

"It is false!" gasped the detected host.

"I have proof, too, that this man carried on this same imposture at Ostend: giving himself out under the same name, and swindling some of the tradespeople there. If he denies it——"

"I admit it—I own it all," said the unhappy host, turning from one to the other. "But, for pity's sake, spare us *for to-night*. My poor wife is innocent. She is indeed a Beaufort."

The clergyman said, gravely:

"You can wait till the morning. She is what he says, a kind, charitable, innocent lady; and, for *her* sake, I think Mr. Guernsey Beaufort—I mean *you*, sir—can wait."

"There can be no harm in that," said the genuine Mr. Beaufort. "You can go back to the company."

The pale and anxious face of Mrs. Guernsey Beaufort—we may so call her, because she *was* a Beaufort of some description—eagerly watched her husband's return. He came up to madame the mayoress, and, with a smile that Lucy long remembered, said:

"It is unpardonable of Le Bœuf. I assure you it was ordered for twelve punctually. I must go and see after him myself. Pay what you will, and whom you will, you see, madame, the master must do a great deal himself"—a speech afterwards repeated often in Dieppe circles, when the curious story of the Beaufort ball was told, as a triumph of assurance and self-possession.

Mr. Beaufort was seen to go out of a side door which led to the restaurant of the place, and was shortly followed by his brother Ernest. The two gentlemen were never seen again by that company.

By half-past twelve Captain Filby was positively outrageous in his language.

"Asking people to famish them in this way! I believe there will be nothing to eat or drink at all, and that the whole is a plant."

But now Le Bœuf himself had come with the news. Where was M. Beaufore?

"Oh, he's all right, never fear; he's gone on. Open the doors, and we'll follow quick enough."

But Le Bœuf would not entertain that view of the matter.

Where was M. le Beaufore?

Where indeed! Who so fitting to ask, after a quarter of an hour's wait, as pale Madame le Beaufore? With a trembling voice, she—she does not know; then, very faintly, "Perhaps he has gone home unwell."

The truth flashes on Le Bœuf—a man of quick wit, and accustomed to all sorts of men in customer-shape.

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"Heaven!" he cries, slapping his forehead, "I am assassinated! He has done me! He has escaped! The tide served at midnight!"

CHAPTER XXXVII. THE SCOURGE.

GILBERT, ill, feverish, hopeless, only waited restlessly for news from the ball. He had sent Margaret, who had promised him that a grand coup would be struck, and that the punishment she had so long promised would on this night overtake the cruel and selfish. "Not that I wish them punished. But how can I endure to see them happy and prosperous? Yet I *do* pray that it may be all ended for ever, this night, between them."

"But how would that help you, dear Gilbert?" said Constance. "Better cease to think of them altogether."

"So you think, Constance, and so do I, if I could. Is that Margaret? There she is! Come, the news—quick! Is all at an end?—is all over?—is he unmasked?"

Margaret was gloomy and excited. "I have failed. They have been too crafty for me. My long journey—all has failed."

"Failed!" he cried, starting up; "and they are to be happy, while I am to live on in this state of purgatory! Is there justice, or Providence? I have tried to fight with this; but I am helpless. Tell me," he went on, in this excited way, raising himself up—"tell me everything. What did they say?—how did she look? Ah, you wont tell me!"

It was not, indeed, Gilbert West who was uttering these incoherencies; it was a fevered and disordered brain. Then he sank back exhausted, and they saw his wild eyes fixed hopelessly on the ceiling. The two women looked at each other, Constance despairingly, Margaret desperately; and Margaret said, between her teeth: "This is *her* doing!"

"Ah!" said Constance, impatiently, "*that* is what has driven him to this. Working on his sense of injury, inflaming him. It is sinful and cruel!"

Margaret started, and surveyed her with infuriated astonishment. She had never more than tolerated this girl, and that simply because Gilbert liked her. But now this tone confounded her.

"Do you dare to interfere with *me*—to find fault? I would give my heart's blood for him!"

"That is nothing," said Constance, vehemently, "if you take *his*. This weary struggle will kill him, and—and—I cannot stand by and see it!"

She trembled at her own audacity. For Constance hitherto had been a sort of little slave, never objecting, always gently obsequious even.

"It is sinful and cruel," she went on, trembling; "and false, too. For I do not believe, as you would have him believe, that this girl is so full of hatred and wickedness. She is gentle and amiable, and there has been some mistake, I know. And I warn you now to stop this cruel inflaming of his mind with suspicions. I will not see it done any longer!"

Margaret, dumb with wonder, could not reply for a moment. She answered differently from what might have been expected.

"I see through all this," she said. "You are a mere fool; and, I warn you, don't think of interfering with me. Keep out of my path, I warn you. I know what will soothe him and ease him; and I tell you that wicked girls, women, or men shall find punishment!"

As she swept away, she seemed to have awe-stricken Constance like one of the avenging furies.

But Margaret scarcely thought of her. She was indeed filled with that one idea—that absorbing thought. She went to her room, hastily and eagerly.

"They shall not have their triumph, and he this degradation and suffering—their calm happiness and sweet engagement, letter-writing, constancy, and, at last, the happy return and long wished-for marriage. Never! I shall do it at all risks. This will spoil their jubilee."

And Margaret, going to her desk, took out what she had carefully put by—one of the sheets of note-paper with the picture of the Paris sanitary establishment at the top. At that late hour, and as she heard the hoarse chiming of the church-clock by, she was busy over her task. Then some one who was flitting about, keeping watch uneasily, heard her go down-stairs; and then, looking out of the window, the same watcher saw her go up the street, deeply veiled and wrapped in a shawl.

The doctor, who wrote on "Idiocy," was right. For some time back, through the length and breadth of France, dull, heavy rumours had been drifting that a dreadful enemy, who came, like a comet, at long intervals, approached slowly, and ravaged the country, might soon be looked for. An epidemic, that seemed more terrible than it is now; for it was unfamiliar, and medical men knew not how to deal with it. It was known to have reached France. It seemed to come with the solemn steady strides of a fell giant. People fled before the monster in a frightened herd—that is, the people of condition and substance. A great deal of his ravages were owing to the wretched drainage, the open sewer which every French street then was, and the rank odours which filled the air. There had been some talk about this plague before the ball.

Our colony had a good deal of what Captain Filby called "true British pluck," or what it fancied was pluck—indifference. The epidemic would not have the impudence to touch them; they could face it without that unworthy crying, or flying, or herding, or, as Captain Filby profanely said, "jabbering of prayers." Perhaps at the bottom of this indifference was the feeling that they could not fly, that they were driven to the edge of the sea, with their back to a wall, and must face it. How easy to cross over into dear happy old England! But, alas!——Still, it was not so likely to come *there*—to the charming Dieppe, always so

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bright and gay and holiday-like, so fashionable, too, and rising every year into greater request.

Yet coming the grim enemy was, steadily and surely. Now at Paris, now nearer; now at Rouen, raging there among the old houses and streets; now at Hâvre, and *then* we begin to turn pale, in spite of the ball.

In half an hour it was known all over the town; up narrow streets—down to the port. Lights began to twinkle in the windows, for people were roused from their beds to hear the dreadful news. Down on the pier, the fishing-boats were going out, but did not put to sea, the fishermen standing in a crowd, talking it over in whispers again. It was a far more awful thing in its proportions *then*, than it has since been. The fishermen were considered happy that they could go on board, and sail away, with the sea between; *there* was impunity; many wished they were fishermen. Before two hours the chief of the police—surely a sacred person—was the next seized; before morning there were half a dozen. There *could* be no mistake, as some had fondly hoped. Every hour it seemed to multiply. Some, looking down into the street, saw people rushing by to fetch the doctor.

It was in this dreadful trial that Doctor Macan was proved in the fire—weighed in the balance, and not found wanting. That upper crust of carelessness, talk, punch, private censures, grumbling, all fell off, as it were, and there he was revealed, a true and clever, zealous man, posting from house to house, and bedside to bedside; not vanquishing—for no one could hope to do that—but alleviating. Had he been cut off during that crisis in his duty, they would have set up a statue to him, as they did at Marseilles to the bishop, who was zealous in the same good cause.

Harco was in a mortal fright, and grew quite low-spirited. "I know it'll catch me," he said, despondingly. "I am as courageous as any man living. Put me in front of a cannon, and see how I'll behave. But of this sort of thing I'd always a morbid terror, from that high. Just one touch here, light as a feather," added Harco, laying his finger on what Doctor Macan would have called Th' Appygasthrum, "and I'm gone, Lulu, pet, never to stand up and address a jury again. No, no, I go back in the very next boat, the same day and hour, or no one goes."

The difficulty of all the colony was his difficulty also. It was easy to get on board the English boat; but the claims of the trusting, easy, suffering class, who were ungratefully called the "Dieppe cormorants," were in the way. Some of the sober, sensible French looked grave. Mr. Penny, the clergyman, used the coming scourge freely as a text for sermons, and warned his congregation that "they should set their house in order."

Meanwhile Mr. Dacres had returned from the Ball, his Lulu on his arm. The dawn was breaking. The lamps, hanging from the cords over their street, looked as pale and faded as many of the ladies did.

Lulu was sad; she was thinking of taking that favourable opportunity of breaking to him what she and Vivian had determined on. Perhaps he would have received the information calmly and hopefully, and said it might be for the best; where was the use of hurry? Now was her opportunity; for dear Harco, a little inspired, we must admit, broke into one of his high keys again.

"Such a night, my dear, and that gentlemanly Trotter! Nothing could be more handsome in a Scotchman. Stood a supper—no less—best wines that Chabot could give. That's what I like; and sang him my old song, dear. Never was in better voice. What in the name of —— is that?"

Some one was at the door; some one was coming up-stairs hurriedly, three steps at a time; some one had bounded into the room. A bright and a happy face.

"My dearest girl, such a piece of news! You know the difficulties I was talking of. Well, while we were at the ball, a letter came to my house—oh, such a joyful letter! All has passed away, and we shall be married to-morrow—to-day, if we like."

"My own brave Vivian, I always said you were a true-hearted man—true and bright as steel." Mr. Dacres wrung him by the hand, firmly believing he had said so: the truth being, he had often expressed the most hearty doubts as to his fidelity. "And what is all this now?" he said, insinuatingly.

"A secret—the old secret," said Vivian, smiling, "and which I must keep to myself a little longer, unless Lucy insists."

The delighted Lucy shook her head. "No, no. It shall be yours."

"We'll fix to-morrow—eh?" said Dacres. "I'll see Penny at once, and have a little snug breakfast from Chabot's—eh, witch? But it's time now we were all in our beds. My legs are calling out, 'Bed, bed!' Good night."

Vivian smiled, and Lucy laughed. Before they parted, she found time to tell what they had heard about West.

"That is the only thing that disturbs me. I fear I have been very cruel and unkind. Perhaps we have mistaken him altogether."

"By-and-by," said he, "we will find all this out. Those bright eyes want their rest."

Then Vivian went away happy, and walked across in the pale daybreak. By its light almost he could read the letter that had brought such a deliverance. It was very short. It ran:

"Sir. I am directed by Dr. Favre to inform you that Madame Marie Vivian expired this morning, at nine o'clock. Awaiting your further instructions,

"I am, Sir, with the highest consideration,

"Jules Favre."

"P.S.—I send this by special messenger."

"I should be grieved," he said, half to him-

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self—"in all common decency. But it was no marriage. I have never spoken, and have hardly seen her since. God forgive her and them. It was a righteous judgment on them all."

So this momentous night at last came to an end.

CHAPTER XXXVIII. A MISSION.

We may conceive the flutter in which this event found our Lucy—dress, flowers, bridesmaids—what not. Now, indeed, all trials—and there were many—were over—happily over. She and her darling soldier were at last to be united, and have done with their troubles. Yet one thing disturbed her—the state of West, and the curious discovery made the night before. Her father was actually then closeted with Sir John, and had quite captivated that eccentric gentleman. Mr. Dacres, indeed, owned that "West's behaviour was incomprehensible."

In the midst of The Dear Girl's preparations, West's image rose up before her: perhaps he had suffered more than they had known or suspected; perhaps there had been no spite or petty persecution; and now, who could tell what was his state? She had sent to make the conventional inquiries; but the messenger had seen Margaret, and come back scared by a cold and bitter reception. "He was as well as his enemies could wish him to be," was her answer.

While she was busy with some little preparation, her maid came to tell her that a lady wished to see her. For a moment she thought it was Margaret, and shrank in terror from such a meeting; but presently a figure glided into the room, which she knew to be Constance. She had often seen, but had never yet met her; for Constance, from some shyness or delicacy as to her position, always kept aloof.

Lucy ran to meet her with the cordiality of a friend. "I am so glad you *have* come here! Tell me about him quickly. I am so distressed. Oh! I heard something last night which I did not know before."

"This is true, then," said Constance, gently, sitting down as she was bid. "Your marriage is to take place to-morrow?"

Lucy looked down. "Yes. All obstacles are to be removed at last. But Mr. West——"

"Oh, he is ill, very ill," said Constance, sadly. "This morning he is up, and pacing about the room in great agitation. One idea has taken possession of him. If something only could be done—if you will see him, even."

"I would do anything in the world; especially as I begin to fear I was a little unjust in one thing."

"A little!" repeated the other, sadly. "Never was any one—forgive me saying so—so cruelly misjudged as he. I found it all out only within these few days. That is what has entered into his heart."

"How! what do you mean?" said Lucy, agitated. "I now know that, when he was away, he generously travelled to Scotland on papa's business, and settled everything; but he acted as if he had done nothing."

"Because he was so proud and so hurt," said Constance, "that dreadful day, when he returned, and found that you had deserted him without a word—you, for whom he was living, for whom he had gone away."

"No!" said Lucy.

"You, who had led him on by false hopes. Why his whole life that time was planning and doing for you and yours. Where are your father's debts and persecutions now? Can you not guess the reason that all his harassing has ceased?"

"And was it Gilbert West? Oh," said Lucy, clasping her hands, "what does this mean?"

"It was for *you* he went back to his old place—though it was a trial he shrank from—had it repaired and fitted up. But you know all this, or must have guessed."

"Never, never!" said Lucy, getting up to walk about. "Oh, what is to be done?"

"Now, we may all ask that," said Constance. "He is the noblest and most generous of men. Did you not see with what calm dignity he bore all those cruel suspicions—which, let me say, should not have come from——"

"I know it, I know it, indeed," said Lucy, despairingly.

"About those wretched adventurers who fled last night, was he not right? You thought it was all spite, because they were friends of yours. Ah! it *was* because they were friends of yours he bore all that. And, oh, that cruel, cruel story sent round, that *he*, the man who had sacrificed so much for you, would have spied on you at that little fair, and circulated scandals. You should have known that was false, and not believed it a second. Not a word, not a whisper, passed his lips. When I tell you that Captain Filby was there——"

"Oh, what *have* I done?" said Lucy, infinitely shocked. "Why did I not know all this before? What can I do now?—tell me." She paused, then started. "Let us go to him at once. I long to see him, to beg his pardon."

The next number will contain the second Portion of

HOLIDAY ROMANCE,

By CHARLES DICKENS;

Which will be continued in each Monthly Part until completed in Four monthly Portions.

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GEORGE SILVERMAN'S EXPLANATION.

Also by CHARLES DICKENS.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—Shakespeare.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XI.

When the last of the guests had driven away, I went back into the inner hall, and found Samuel at the side-table, presiding over the brandy and soda-water. My lady and Miss Rachel came out of the drawing-room, followed by the two gentlemen. Mr. Godfrey had some brandy and soda-water. Mr. Franklin took nothing. He sat down, looking dead tired: the talking on this birthday occasion had, I suppose, been too much for him.

My lady, turning round to wish them good night, looked hard at the wicked Colonel's legacy shining in her daughter's dress.

"Rachel," she asked, "where are you going to put your Diamond to-night?"

Miss Rachel was in high good spirits, just in that humour for talking nonsense, and perversely persisting in it as if it was sense, which you may sometimes have observed in young girls, when they are highly wrought up, at the end of an exciting day. First, she declared she didn't know where to put the Diamond. Then she said, "on her dressing-table, of course, along with her other things." Then she remembered that the Diamond might take to shining of itself, with its awful moony light, in the dark, and that would terrify her in the dead of night. Then she bethought herself of an Indian cabinet which stood in her sitting-room; and instantly made up her mind to put the Indian diamond in the Indian cabinet, for the purpose of permitting two beautiful native productions to admire each other. Having let her little flow of nonsense run on as far as that point, her mother interposed and stopped her.

"My dear! your Indian cabinet has no lock to it," says my lady.

"Good Heavens, mamma!" cries Miss Rachel, "is this an hotel? Are there thieves in the house?"

Without taking notice of this fantastic way of talking, my lady wished the gentlemen good night. She next turned to Miss Rachel, and kissed her. "Why not let *me* keep the Diamond for you to-night?" she asked.

Miss Rachel received that proposal as she might, ten years since, have received a proposal to part her from a new doll. My lady saw there was no reasoning with her that night. "Come into my room, Rachel, the first thing to-morrow morning," she said. "I shall have something to say to you." With those last words she left us slowly; thinking her own thoughts, and, to all appearance, not best pleased with the way by which they were leading her.

Miss Rachel was the next to say good-night. She shook hands first with Mr. Godfrey, who was standing at the other end of the hall, looking at a picture. Then she turned back to Mr. Franklin, still sitting weary and silent in a corner.

What words passed between them I can't say. But standing near the old oak frame which holds our large looking-glass, I saw her, reflected in it, slyly slipping the locket which Mr. Franklin had given to her, out of the bosom of her dress, and showing it to him for a moment, with a smile which certainly meant something out of the common, before she tripped off to bed. This incident staggered me a little in the reliance I had previously felt on my own judgment. I began to think that Penelope might be right about the state of her young lady's affections, after all.

As soon as Miss Rachel left him eyes to see with, Mr. Franklin noticed me. His variable humour, shifting about everything, had shifted about the Indians already.

"Betteredge," he said, "I'm half inclined to think I took Mr. Murthwaite too seriously, when we had that talk in the shrubbery. I wonder whether he has been trying any of his traveller's tales on us? Do you really mean to let the dogs loose?"

"I'll relieve them of their collars, sir," I answered, "and leave them free to take a turn in the night, if they smell a reason for it."

"All right," says Mr. Franklin. "We'll see what is to be done to-morrow. I am not at all disposed to alarm my aunt, Betteredge, without a very pressing reason for it. Good night."

He looked so worn and pale as he nodded to me, and took his candle to go upstairs, that I ventured to advise his having a drop of brandy and water, by way of nightcap. Mr. Godfrey, walking towards us from the other end of the hall, backed me. He pressed Mr. Franklin, in

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the friendliest manner, to take something, before he went to bed.

I only note these trifling circumstances, because, after all I had seen and heard, that day, it pleased me to observe that our two gentlemen were on just as good terms as ever. Their warfare of words (heard by Penelope in the drawing-room), and their rivalry for the best place in Miss Rachel's good graces, seemed to have set no serious difference between them. But there! they were both good-tempered, and both men of the world. And there is certainly this merit in people of station, that they are not nearly so quarrelsome among each other as people of no station at all.

Mr. Franklin declined the brandy and water, and went upstairs with Mr. Godfrey, their rooms being next door to each other. On the landing, however, either his cousin persuaded him, or he veered about and changed his mind as usual. "Perhaps I may want it in the night," he called down to me. "Send up some brandy into my room."

I sent up Samuel with the brandy and water; and then went out, and unbuckled the dogs' collars. They both lost their heads with astonishment on being set loose at that time of night, and jumped upon me like a couple of puppies! However, the rain soon cooled them down again: they lapped a drop of water each, and crept back into their kennels. As I went into the house, I noticed signs in the sky which betokened a break in the weather for the better. For the present, it still poured heavily, and the ground was in a perfect sop.

Samuel and I went all over the house, and shut up as usual. I examined everything myself, and trusted nothing to my deputy on this occasion. All was safe and fast, when I rested my old bones in bed, between midnight and one in the morning.

The worries of the day had been a little too much for me, I suppose. At any rate, I had a touch of Mr. Franklin's malady that night. It was sunrise, before I fell off at last into a sleep. All the time I lay awake, the house was as quiet as the grave. Not a sound stirred but the splash of the rain, and the sighing of the wind among the trees as a breeze sprang up with the morning.

About half-past seven I woke, and opened my window on a fine sunshiny day. The clock had struck eight, and I was just going out to chain up the dogs again, when I heard a sudden whisking of petticoats on the stairs behind me.

I turned about, and there was Penelope flying down after me like mad. "Father!" she screamed, "come upstairs, for God's sake! *The Diamond is gone!*"

"Are you out of your mind?" I asked her.

"Gone!" says Penelope. "Gone, nobody knows how! Come up and see."

She dragged me after her into our young lady's sitting-room, which opened into her bedroom. There, on the threshold of her bed-room door, stood Miss Rachel, almost as white in the face as the white dressing-gown that clothed her. There also stood the two doors of the Indian cabinet, wide open. One of the drawers inside was pulled out as far as it would go.

"Look!" says Penelope. "I myself saw Miss Rachel put the Diamond into that drawer last night."

I went to the cabinet. The drawer was empty.

"Is this true, miss?" I asked.

With a look that was not like herself, with a voice that was not like her own, Miss Rachel answered, as my daughter had answered:

"The Diamond is gone."

Having said those words, she withdrew into her bedroom, and shut and locked the door.

Before we knew which way to turn next, my lady came in, hearing my voice in her daughter's sitting-room, and wondering what had happened. The news of the loss of the Diamond seemed to petrify her. She went straight to Miss Rachel's bedroom, and insisted on being admitted. Miss Rachel let her in.

The alarm, running through the house like fire, caught the two gentlemen next.

Mr. Godfrey was the first to come out of his room. All he did when he heard what had happened was to hold up his hands in a state of bewilderment, which didn't say much for his natural strength of mind. Mr. Franklin, whose clear head I had confidently counted on to advise us, seemed to be as helpless as his cousin when he heard the news in his turn. For a wonder, he had had a good night's rest at last; and the unaccustomed luxury of sleep had, as he said himself, apparently stupified him. However, when he had swallowed his cup of coffee—which he always took, on the foreign plan, some hours before he ate any breakfast—his brains brightened; the clear-headed side of him turned up, and he took the matter in hand, resolutely and cleverly, much as follows:

He first sent for the servants, and told them to leave all the lower doors and windows (with the exception of the front door, which I had opened) exactly as they had been left when we locked up overnight. He next proposed to his cousin and to me to make quite sure, before we took any further steps, that the Diamond had not accidentally dropped somewhere out of sight—say at the back of the cabinet, or down behind the table on which the cabinet stood. Having searched in both places, and found nothing—having also questioned Penelope, and discovered from her no more than the little she had already told me—Mr. Franklin suggested extending our inquiries to Miss Rachel next, and sent Penelope to knock at her bedroom door.

My lady answered the knock, and closed the door behind her. The moment after, we heard it locked inside by Miss Rachel. My mistress came out among us, looking sorely puzzled and distressed. "The loss of the Diamond seems to have quite overwhelmed Rachel," she said, in reply to Mr. Franklin. "She shrinks,

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in the strangest manner, from speaking of it, even to *me*. It is impossible you can see her for the present."

Having added to our perplexities by this account of Miss Rachel, my lady, after a little effort, recovered her usual composure, and acted with her usual decision.

"I suppose there is no help for it?" she said, quietly. "I suppose I have no alternative but to send for the police?"

"And the first thing for the police to do," added Mr. Franklin, catching her up, "is to lay hands on the Indian jugglers who performed here last night."

My lady and Mr. Godfrey (not knowing what Mr. Franklin and I knew) both started, and both looked surprised.

"I can't stop to explain myself, now," Mr. Franklin went on. "I can only tell you that the Indians have certainly stolen the Diamond. Give me a letter of introduction," says he, addressing my lady, "to one of the magistrates at Frizinghall—merely telling him that I represent your interests and wishes, and let me ride off with it instantly. Our chance of catching the thieves may depend on our not wasting one unnecessary minute." (*Nota bene:* Whether it was the French side or the English, the right side of Mr. Franklin seemed to be uppermost now. The only question was, How long would it last?)

He put pen, ink, and paper before his aunt, who (as it appeared to me) wrote the letter he wanted, a little unwillingly. If it had been possible to overlook such an event as the loss of a jewel worth twenty thousand pounds, I believe—with my lady's opinion of her late brother, and her distrust of his birthday-gift—it would have been privately a relief to her to let the thieves get off with the Moonstone scot free.

I went out with Mr. Franklin to the stables, and took the opportunity of asking him how the Indians (whom I suspected, of course, as shrewdly as he did) could possibly have got into the house.

"One of them might have slipped into the hall, in the confusion, when the dinner-company were going away," says Mr. Franklin. "The fellow may have been under the sofa while my aunt and Rachel were talking about where the Diamond was to be put for the night. He would only have to wait till the house was quiet, and there it would be in the cabinet, to be had for the taking." With those words, he called to the groom to open the gate, and galloped off.

This seemed certainly to be the only rational explanation. But how had the thief contrived to make his escape from the house? I had found the front door locked and bolted, as I had left it at night, when I went to open it, after getting up. As for the other doors and windows, there they were still, all safe and fast, to speak for themselves. The dogs, too? Suppose the thief had got away by dropping from one of the upper windows, how had he escaped the dogs? Had he come provided for them with drugged meat? As the doubt crossed my mind, the dogs themselves came galloping at me round a corner, rolling each other over on the wet grass, in such lively health and spirits that it was with no small difficulty I brought them to reason, and chained them up again. The more I turned it over in my mind, the less satisfactory Mr. Franklin's explanation appeared to be.

We had our breakfasts—whatever happens in a house, robbery or murder, it doesn't matter, you must have your breakfast. When we had done, my lady sent for me; and I found myself compelled to tell her all that I had hitherto concealed, relating to the Indians and their plot. Being a woman of a high courage, she soon got over the first startling effect of what I had to communicate. Her mind seemed to be far more perturbed about her daughter than about the heathen rogues and their conspiracy. "You know how odd Rachel is, and how differently she behaves sometimes from other girls," my lady said to me. "But I have never, in all my experience, seen her so strange and so reserved as she is now. The loss of her jewel seems almost to have turned her brain. Who would have thought that horrible Diamond could have laid such a hold on her in so short a time?"

It was certainly strange. Taking toys and trinkets in general, Miss Rachel was nothing like so mad after them as most young girls. Yet there she was, still locked up inconsolably in her bed-room. It is but fair to add that she was not the only one of us in the house who was thrown out of the regular groove. Mr. Godfrey, for instance—though professionally a sort of consoler-general—seemed to be at a loss where to look for his own resources. Having no company to amuse him, and getting no chance of trying what his experience of women in distress could do towards comforting Miss Rachel, he wandered hither and thither about the house and garden in an aimless uneasy way. He was in two different minds about what it became him to do, after the misfortune that had happened to us. Ought he to relieve the family, in their present situation, of the responsibility of him as a guest? or ought he to stay on the chance that even his humble services might be of some use? He decided ultimately that the last course was perhaps the most customary and considerate course to take, in such a very peculiar case of family distress as this was. Circumstances try the metal a man is really made of. Mr. Godfrey, tried by circumstances, showed himself of weaker metal than I had thought him to be. As for the women-servants—excepting Rosanna Spearman, who kept by herself—they took to whispering together in corners, and staring at nothing suspiciously, as is the manner of that weaker half of the human family, when anything extraordinary happens in a house. I myself acknowledge to having been fidgety and ill-tempered. The cursed Moonstone had turned us all upside down.

A little before eleven, Mr. Franklin came

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back. The resolute side of him had, to all appearance, given way, in the interval since his departure, under the stress that had been laid on it. He had left us at a gallop; he came back to us at a walk. When he went away, he was made of iron. When he returned, he was stuffed with cotton, as limp as limp could be.

"Well!" says my lady, "are the police coming?"

"Yes," says Mr. Franklin; "they said they would follow me in a fly. Superintendent Seegrave, of your local police force, and two of his men. A mere form! The case is hopeless."

"What! have the Indians escaped, sir?" I asked.

"The poor ill-used Indians have been most unjustly put in prison," says Mr. Franklin. "They are as innocent as the babe unborn. My idea that one of them was hidden in the house, has ended, like all the rest of my ideas, in smoke. It's been proved," says Mr. Franklin, dwelling with great relish on his own incapacity, "to be simply impossible."

After astonishing us by announcing this totally new turn in the matter of the Moonstone, our young gentleman, at his aunt's request, took a seat, and explained himself.

It appeared that the resolute side of him had held out as far as Frizinghall. He had put the whole case plainly before the magistrate, and the magistrate had at once sent for the police. The first inquiries instituted about the Indians showed that they had not so much as attempted to leave the town. Further questions addressed to the police proved that all three had been seen returning to Frizinghall with their boy, on the previous night between ten and eleven—which (regard being had to hours and distances) also proved that they had walked straight back, after performing on our terrace. Later still, at midnight, the police, having occasion to search the common lodging-house where they lived, had seen them all three again, and their little boy with them as usual. Soon after midnight, I myself had safely shut up the house. Plainer evidence than this, in favour of the Indians, there could not well be. The magistrate said there was not even a case of suspicion against them, so far. But, as it was just possible, when the police came to investigate the matter, that discoveries affecting the jugglers might be made, he would contrive, by committing them as rogues and vagabonds, to keep them at our disposal, under lock and key, for a week. They had ignorantly done something (I forget what) in the town, which barely brought them within the operation of the law. Every human institution (Justice included) will stretch a little, if you only pull it the right way. The worthy magistrate was an old friend of my lady's—and the Indian lot were "committed" for a week, as soon as the court opened that morning.

Such was Mr. Franklin's narrative of events at Frizinghall. The Indian clue to the mystery of the lost jewel was now, to all appearance, a clue that had broken in our hands. If the jugglers were innocent, who, in the name of wonder, had taken the Moonstone out of Miss Rachel's drawer?

Ten minutes later, to our infinite relief, Superintendent Seegrave arrived at the house. He reported passing Mr. Franklin on the terrace, sitting in the sun (I suppose with the Italian side of him uppermost); and warning the police, as they went by, that the investigation was hopeless, before the investigation had begun.

For a family in our situation, the superintendent of the Frizinghall police was the most comforting officer you could wish to see. Mr. Seegrave was tall and portly, and military in his manners. He had a fine commanding voice, and a mighty resolute eye, and a grand frock coat which buttoned beautifully up to his leather stock. "I'm the man you want!" was written all over his face; and he ordered his two inferior policemen about with a severity which convinced us all that there was no trifling with *him*.

He began by going round the premises, outside and in; the result of that investigation proving to him that no thieves had broken in upon us from outside, and that the robbery, consequently, must have been committed by some person in the house. I leave you to imagine the state the servants were in when this official announcement first reached their ears. The Superintendent decided to begin by examining the boudoir; and, that done, to examine the servants next. At the same time, he posted one of his men on the staircase which led to the servants' bedrooms, with instructions to let nobody in the house pass him, till further orders.

At this latter proceeding, the weaker half of the human family went distracted on the spot. They bounced out of their corners; whisked up-stairs in a body to Miss Rachel's room (Rosanna Spearman being carried away among them this time); burst in on Superintendent Seegrave, and, all looking equally guilty, summoned him to say which of them he suspected, at once.

Mr. Superintendent proved equal to the occasion: he looked at them with his resolute eye, and he cowed them with his military voice. "Now, then, you women, go down-stairs again, every one of you. I won't have you here. Look!" says Mr. Superintendent, suddenly pointing to a little smear of the decorative painting on Miss Rachel's door—at the outer edge, just under the lock. "Look what mischief the petticoats of some of you have done already. Clear out! clear out!" Rosanna Spearman, who was nearest to him, and nearest to the little smear on the door, set the example of obedience, and slipped off instantly to her work. The rest followed her out. The Superintendent finished his examination of the room; and, making nothing of it, asked me who had first discovered the robbery. My daughter had first discovered it. My daughter was sent for.

Mr. Superintendent proved to be a little too

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sharp with Penelope at starting. "Now, young woman, attend to me—and mind you speak the truth." Penelope fired up instantly. "I've never been taught to tell lies, Mr. Policeman!—and if father can stand there and hear me accused of falsehood and thieving, and my own bedroom shut against me, and my character taken away, which is all a poor girl has left, he's not the good father I take him for!" A timely word from me put Justice and Penelope on a pleasanter footing together. The questions and answers went swimmingly; and ended in nothing worth mentioning. My daughter had seen Miss Rachel put the Diamond in the drawer of the cabinet, the last thing at night. She had gone in with Miss Rachel's cup of tea, at eight the next morning, and had found the drawer open and empty. Upon that, she had alarmed the house—and there was an end of Penelope's evidence.

Mr. Superintendent next asked to see Miss Rachel herself. Penelope mentioned his request through the door. The answer reached us by the same road: "I have nothing to tell the policeman—I can't see anybody." Our experienced officer looked equally surprised and offended, when he heard that reply. I told him my young lady was ill, and begged him to wait a little and see her later. We thereupon went down-stairs again; and were met by Mr. Godfrey and Mr. Franklin, crossing the hall.

The two gentlemen, being inmates of the house, were summoned to say if they could throw any light on the matter. Neither of them knew anything about it. Had they heard any suspicious noises during the previous night? They had heard nothing but the pattering of the rain. Had I, lying awake longer than either of them, heard nothing either? Nothing! Released from examination, Mr. Franklin (still sticking to the helpless view of our difficulty) whispered to me: "That man will be of no earthly use to us. Superintendent Seegrave is an ass." Released in his turn, Mr. Godfrey whispered to me: "Evidently a most competent person. Betteridge, I have the greatest faith in him!" Many men, many opinions, as one of the ancients said, before my time.

Mr. Superintendent's next proceeding took him back to the "boudoir" again, with my daughter and me at his heels. His object was to discover whether any of the furniture had been moved, during the night, out of its customary place—his previous investigation in the room having, apparently, not gone quite far enough to satisfy his mind on this point.

While we were still poking about among the chairs and tables, the door of the bedroom was suddenly opened. After having denied herself to everybody, Miss Rachel, to our astonishment, walked into the midst of us of her own accord. She took up her garden hat from a chair, and then went straight to Penelope with this question:

"Mr. Franklin Blake sent you with a message to me this morning?"

"Yes, miss."

"He wished to speak to me, didn't he?"

"Yes, miss."

"Where is he now?"

Hearing voices on the terrace below, I looked out of window, and saw the two gentlemen walking up and down together. Answering for my daughter, I said, "Mr. Franklin is on the terrace, miss."

Without another word, without heeding Mr. Superintendent, who tried to speak to her; pale as death, and wrapped up strangely in her own thoughts, she left the room, and went down to her cousins on the terrace.

It showed a want of due respect, it showed a breach of good manners, on my part; but, for the life of me, I couldn't help looking out of window when Miss Rachel met the gentlemen outside. She went up to Mr. Franklin without appearing to notice Mr. Godfrey, who thereupon drew back and left them by themselves. What she said to Mr. Franklin appeared to be spoken vehemently. It lasted but for a short time; and (judging by what I saw of his face from the window) seemed to astonish him beyond all power of expression. While they were still together, my lady appeared on the terrace. Miss Rachel saw her—said a few last words to Mr. Franklin—and suddenly went back into the house again, before her mother came up with her. My lady, surprised herself, and noticing Mr. Franklin's surprise, spoke to him. Mr. Godfrey joined them, and spoke also. Mr. Franklin walked away a little, between the two, telling them what had happened, I suppose; for they both stopped short, after taking a few steps, like persons struck with amazement. I had just seen as much as this, when the door of the sitting-room was opened violently. Miss Rachel walked swiftly through to her bedroom, wild and angry, with fierce eyes and flaming cheeks. Mr. Superintendent once more attempted to question her. She turned round on him at her bedroom door. "*I* have not sent for you!" she cried out, vehemently. "*I* don't want you. My Diamond is lost. Neither you nor anybody will ever find it!" With those words she went in, and locked the door in our faces. Penelope, standing nearest to it, heard her burst out crying the moment she was alone again.

In a rage, one moment; in tears, the next! What did it mean?

I told the Superintendent it meant that Miss Rachel's temper was upset by the loss of her jewel. Being anxious for the honour of the family, it distressed me to see my young lady forget herself—even with a police-officer—and I made the best excuse I could, accordingly. In my own private mind, I was more puzzled by Miss Rachel's extraordinary language and conduct than words can tell. Taking what she had said at her bedroom door as a guide to guess by, I could only conclude that she was mortally offended by our sending for the police, and that Mr. Franklin's astonishment on the terrace was caused by her having expressed

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herself to him (as the person chiefly instrumental in fetching the police) to that effect. If this guess was right, why—having lost her Diamond—should she object to the presence in the house of the very people whose business it was to recover it for her? And how, in Heaven's name, could *she* know that the Moonstone would never be found again?

As things stood, at present, no answer to those questions was to be hoped for from anybody in the house. Mr. Franklin appeared to think it a point of honour to forbear repeating to a servant—even to so old a servant as I was—what Miss Rachel had said to him on the terrace. Mr. Godfrey, who, as a gentleman and a relative, had been probably admitted into Mr. Franklin's confidence, respected that confidence as he was bound to do. My lady, who was also in the secret no doubt, and who alone had access to Miss Rachel, owned openly that she could make nothing of her. "You madden me, when you talk of the Diamond!" All her mother's influence failed to extract from her a word more than that.

Here we were, then, at a dead lock about Miss Rachel—and at a dead lock about the Moonstone. In the first case, my lady was powerless to help us. In the second (as you shall presently judge), Mr. Seegrave was fast approaching the condition of a superintendent at his wits' end.

Having ferreted about all over the "boudoir," without making any discoveries among the furniture, our experienced officer applied to me to know, whether the servants in general were or were not acquainted with the place in which the Diamond had been put for the night.

"I knew where it was put, sir," I said, "to begin with. Samuel the footman, knew also; for he was present in the hall, when they were talking about where the Diamond was to be kept that night. My daughter knew, as she has already told you. She or Samuel may have mentioned the thing to the other servants—or the other servants may have heard the talk for themselves, through the side-door of the hall, which might have been open to the back staircase. For all I can tell, everybody in the house may have known where the jewel was, last night."

My answer presenting rather a wide field for Mr. Superintendent's suspicions to range over, he tried to narrow it by asking about the servants' characters next.

I thought directly of Rosanna Spearman. But it was neither my place, nor my wish, to direct suspicion against a poor girl, whose honesty had been above all doubt as long as I had known her. The matron at the Reformatory had reported her to my lady as a sincerely penitent and thoroughly trustworthy girl. It was the Superintendent's business to discover reason for suspecting her first—and then, and not till then, it would be my duty to tell him how she came into my lady's service. "All our people have excellent characters," I said. "And all have deserved the trust their mistress has placed in them." After that, there was but one thing left for Mr. Seegrave to do—namely, to set to work, and tackle the servants' characters himself.

One after another, they were examined. One after another, they proved to have nothing to say—and said it (so far as the women were concerned) at great length, and with a very angry sense of the embargo laid on their bedrooms. The rest of them being sent back to their places down-stairs, Penelope was then summoned, and examined separately a second time.

My daughter's little outbreak of temper in the "boudoir," and her readiness to think herself suspected, appeared to have produced an unfavourable impression on Superintendent Seegrave. It seemed also to dwell a little on his mind, that she had been the last person who saw the Diamond at night. When the second questioning was over, my girl came back to me in a frenzy. There was no doubt of it any longer—the police-officer had almost as good as told her she was the thief! I could scarcely believe him (taking Mr. Franklin's view) to be quite such an ass as that. But, though he said nothing, the eye with which he looked at my daughter was not a pleasant eye to see. I laughed it off with poor Penelope, as something too ridiculous to be treated seriously—which it certainly was. Secretly, I am afraid I was foolish enough to be angry too. It was a little trying—it was indeed. My girl sat down in a corner, with her apron over her head, quite broken-hearted. Foolish of her, you will say: she might have waited till he openly accused her. Well, being a man of just and equal temper, I admit that. Still Mr. Superintendent might have remembered—never mind what he might have remembered. The devil take him!

The next and last step in the investigation brought matters, as they say, to a crisis. The officer had an interview (at which I was present) with my lady. After informing her that the Diamond *must* have been taken by somebody in the house, he requested permission for himself and his men to search the servants' rooms and boxes on the spot. My good mistress, like the generous high-bred woman she was, refused to let us be treated like thieves. "I will never consent to make such a return as that," she said, "for all I owe to the faithful servants who are employed in my house."

Mr. Superintendent made his bow, with a look in my direction, which said plainly, "Why employ me, if you are to tie my hands in this way?" As head of the servants, I felt directly that we were bound, in justice to all parties, not to profit by our mistress's generosity. "We gratefully thank your ladyship," I said; "but we ask permission to do what is right in this matter, by giving up our keys. When Gabriel Betteredge sets the example," says I, stopping Superintendent Seegrave at the door, "the rest of the servants will follow, I promise you. There are my keys, to begin with!" My lady took me by the hand, and thanked me with the tears in her eyes. Lord! what would

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I not have given, at that moment, for the privilege of knocking Superintendent Seegrave down!

As I had promised for them, the other servants followed my lead, sorely against the grain, of course, but all taking the view that I took. The women were a sight to see, while the police-officers were rummaging among their things. The cook looked as if she could grill Mr. Superintendent alive on a furnace, and the other women looked as if they could eat him when he was done.

The search over, and no Diamond or sign of a Diamond being found, of course, anywhere, Superintendent Seegrave retired to my little room to consider with himself what he was to do next. He and his men had now been hours in the house, and had not advanced us one inch towards a discovery of how the Moonstone had been taken, or of whom we were to suspect as the thief.

While the police-officer was still pondering in solitude, I was sent for to see Mr. Franklin in the library. To my unutterable astonishment, just as my hand was on the door, it was suddenly opened from the inside, and out walked Rosanna Spearman!

GENERAL FALCON.

One of my first objects on arriving at Venezuela was to have an interview with General Falcon, the president of the republic. In my simplicity, I imagined that my wishes in this respect would be easily gratified, and I was not a little surprised when the announcement of my intention was received everywhere with shrugs. On inquiry, I was told that the president never came to the capital; and that if I was bent on seeing him, I should have to go to Coro or Maracaybo. The distance of these places was great, but their inaccessibility was greater. "Besides," said my informant, opening his eyes wider and wider, as he thought of the difficulties, "Coro is so confoundedly unhealthy, and you will be sure to die of fever, or to be eaten by wild beasts in the forest, before you get there. There are no roads, and no places to put up at, and there is hardly a misery existing that you will not have to encounter. Here, just look at the map. You will go by sea to Puerto Cabello. That is one of the worst places in the world for yellow fever, and they have got it there just now. Then, from Puerto Cabello to the Yaracui and Aroa rivers, you will have to cross a burning waste, in which there is not a single shrub ten feet high to keep off the sun. After that, you will get into the jungles of Coro, through which it is hardly possible to push your way—a regular hot-bed of fever, and swarming with tigers, as they call the jaguars and panthers here. As for the road from Coro to Maracaybo, it is a thousand time worse; but I shall say nothing about it, for I am sure you will never get so far."

I could not help smiling at my friend's vehemence, but I did not feel at all deterred, until he further assured me that on arriving at Coro I should very likely find that the president had gone to some other remote region, whither it would be impossible for me to follow him. I then began to feel somewhat as an envoy would, who, on arriving in London, accredited to the Court of St. James, should be told that the queen never came to town, and that he must go to the Orkney Islands, to be presented, with the chance of a further expedition to Cork or Jersey. Not, indeed, that any journey by rail or steam-boat can compare with one in a country where no such facilities exist, and where, generally speaking, there is—

> Neither horse meat, nor man's meat, nor place to lie down.

After pondering over the matter a good deal, I came to that well-known conclusion—the usual refuge of weak minds—that I would be guided by circumstances. To a man who has serious business on hand, the chase of a Jack o'Lanthorn is not a pleasant pastime, even though the said Jack should be a president and a "grand mariscal." However, I undertook the pursuit; and, at last, after being thrown out several times, discovered the veritable whereabouts of his excellency, and went to meet him as he approached Valencia. I succeeded in obtaining the interview, but it must be confessed that I owed this, not to the fact that I had come so many miles for the express purpose of seeing the great man, nor to the repeated messages I had sent to him by couriers, but to the breaking out of disturbances in the central and eastern provinces of the republic. As soon as the distant meshes of the political web began to vibrate, the master spinner made his appearance from the recesses of Coro, and the reports of his erratic movements, now to Maracaybo, now to San Felipe, now to Barquisimeto, ceased.

It was a bright hot forenoon in the first week of September when, as I was lazily swinging in my hammock in the Calle de Constitucion at Valencia, the unusual sound of martial music reached my ear. Starting up, I hurried to the Gran Plaza, and was in time to see the Venezuelan army enter. Shades of Brion and Bolivar! what an army it was! I have seen troops of all nations, civilised and uncivilised, from China to Peru, but never any like those. Some of the officers, indeed, were tall and well-made; but the men were the strangest figures—lean old scarecrows and starveling boys not five feet high, the greater number half naked, with huge strips of raw beef twisted round their hats or hanging from their belts. Their skins seemed to have been baked black with exposure to the sun, and their arms and accoutrements were of the most wretched description. Yet they were not contemptible—far from it—but rather weird, repulsive—a sight to make one shudder. My first thought on seeing them was, "What could want, miasma, exposure, or fatigue

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do to harm those animated skeletons? Could anything make them blacker, grimmer, more fleshless, more miserable? But in this very wretchedness consists their strength; for European soldiers could not exist where these men would thrive."

It was near one P.M. before the last of these skeleton bands filed into the great square. I counted them as well as I could, and made out that there were about three thousand men, with eight standards, each standard marking a battalion. They lined the square, and then dispersed to their quarters. They vanished like an army of spectres, and, it must be owned, with as little noise. I went about the city a good deal that evening, but I saw but very few of the goblin host that had filled the Gran Plaza at noon, and disturbance there was none. This fact made an impression on my mind, and next morning, as I was pulling on my jack-boots preparatory to a long ride to meet General Falcon, I said to my servant, "Quiet fellows those, Juan! Last night I saw only one man drunk out of the three thousand!" "Oh yes, sir, quiet enough, specially when they are going to shoot at you from behind a tree," replied Juan, who had evidently no very exalted opinion of the goblins. "Oh, then they do shoot people sometimes!" I rejoined, in a tone intended to excite Juan's rather irritable mood to the uttermost. "Shoot, sir? I b'lieve you!" he exclaimed, with a snort. "Why, when this gang marched into Caracas, they were very near shooting a lady—Madame R.—because her little boy had a red riband in his cap. You know, red's the colour of the aristocratical party, the same as these chaps call the Godos and Epilepticos the 'Goths' and 'Epileptics.' Well, sir, there were above a hundred muskets pointed at the balcony where Madame R. was. 'Down with the oligarchs!' 'Down with the red!' they kept shouting; but they weren't a-going to frighten her, I promise you. 'Stead of that, she clapped her hand on her son's cap to keep it on, and called out to them, 'Viva the red! You canaille, he shall wear it!' And then in another moment, not the boy only, but herself too, and every one in that balcony, would have been dyed red in their own blood; but General Guzman Blanco spurred his horse in front, and said they should shoot him first before they should harm a woman and a child."

By this time I had got on my boots, and had lighted my cigar; so I descended to the street to mount; for the governor of the province had sent me a message that he should start at six A.M., with all the notables of Valencia, to meet the president, and hoped I would ride with him. I had sent to borrow a horse, and I found a remarkable animal awaiting me. He was young, full of fire, and very handsome—all but his colour, which was almost that of slate, with white eyes. Altogether he was a good specimen of the Venezuelan horse, a capital charger in miniature, and not more than fourteen hands and a half high. Punctuality is not one of the Venezuelan virtues, as I found on this occasion. Although I had been warned that the governor would start exactly at six, I had to wait at least half an hour; and, as my horse was extremely fresh and fidgety, it was rather fatiguing. At last we started in a cavalcade of some twenty or thirty horsemen, and, seeing a Spanish friend among them with whom I was rather intimate, I fell into discourse with him about the Venezuelan troops I had seen the day before, and their character. My friend said they were much better soldiers than they looked. He had no great opinion of their humanity, and not only confirmed Juan's story of Madame R. and her child, but told me several anecdotes not at all suggestive of Venezuelan love of fair play. Amongst other things, he said that when the party now in power made their triumphal entry into Caracas, one of their officers insulted an officer of the oligarchists. A duel was fought on the spot, in sight of an excited crowd of soldiers and others; and when the democrat was run through the body, the bystanders discharged a whole volley at the conqueror, who fell pierced with twenty bullets. I then asked him his opinion of the president. "Falcon," said he, "deserves a bright page in history for his moderation. Of all the men who have governed Venezuela, Falcon is by far the most humane. Bolivar, as you know, was guilty of many sanguinary acts. On the 14th, 15th, and 16th of February, 1814, he had almost as many persons shot as Robespierre sent to the guillotine. Some of them were aged men of fourscore years, who could not walk; so had to be carried to the place of execution in chairs. The other great revolutionary leaders have been sanguinary, too, and even those associated with Falcon, as Sotillo, are no exceptions to the rule; but Falcon himself is a shining example of clemency and courage combined. Nor can it be denied that in his case clemency has proved the best policy. I will give you an example. In 1861 he fought a drawn battle with Paez near Caracas. Prisoners were taken on both sides. Falcon treated his well, and, after a few days, sent an officer into Caracas with a flag of truce, and invited an exchange. Paez, it is said, sent for the prisoners he had made, and ordered them to be shot—a command which was immediately carried into execution; then, turning to the officer who had come from Falcon, he bade him depart and report what he had seen to his general. Shortly after that officer had returned to his own camp, General Falcon rode up to the place where his prisoners were, and calling out one of them, a Mr. Sutherland, put a paper into his hands; it was the account of the execution at Caracas. Sutherland read the report, handed it back to Falcon, and said, 'Well, general, of course I know our fate is settled. Allow me, however, to thank you for the very kind way in which we have been treated ever since we have been in your hands.' General Falcon bowed, and replied, 'In an hour you will receive notice of my decision.' With these words the general rode away, and Mr. Sutherland and his fellow-prisoners prepared for

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instant death. In rather less than an hour one of Falcon's aide-de-camps rode up, and brought a sealed paper, which he delivered into Mr. Sutherland's hands, after causing the other prisoners to be brought out. They were brave men; but it is not to be doubted that the pulse of some of them beat fast in that awful moment of suspense, remembering, as they must have done, that even the small boon of a soldier's death was not always granted in some of the barbarous executions of the preceding wars. What was their astonishment, then, when Sutherland read aloud these words: 'General Falcon is unable to retaliate for one barbarity by the perpetration of another. The prisoners taken by him in the late action are free on their parole not to bear arms against him in the present war. And, further, as many of them have great distances to travel to reach their homes, they will each be provided with a sum of money sufficient for the journey!'

"You may be sure that there was a shout of 'Viva Falcons!' on this announcement. But what is more, Sutherland—who had been a steady opponent of Falcon till then—was so touched by his magnanimity, that he hastened to his native place, Maracaybo, and raised the whole province in favour of his benefactor. This mission had an important effect in deciding the issue of the struggle, and from that day to this Maracaybo has continued faithful to Falcon under the guidance of Sutherland, who was elected president of the province."

By the time this anecdote and some others were told, we had got well on our way to Tocuyo, which is about twelve miles distant from Valencia. We were fast approaching the western range of mountains which stretches from Valencia towards Apure, and as we advanced the beauty of the scenery increased. At the same time very threatening clouds were gathering in front of us, and, not wishing to get a soaking, I gave my horse the spur, and soon left every one of my companions behind, and reached the posada of Tocuyo at full gallop. It was well I did so, for a few minutes after I arrived the rain descended in a thunder-plump, which would have drenched me to the skin in an instant. In the midst of this deluge my Valencian friends arrived, and a few minutes afterwards a large body of horsemen made their appearance from the opposite direction, issuing from a gorge in the mountains. Hereupon some fifty tatterdemalion soldiers, who were ensconced in the sheds near the posada, were hastily called out, and presented arms, as a powerfully built man, with a great slouching sombrero, rode up at the head of the horsemen we had seen coming from the mountains.

"So this is Falcon," I said to myself, as the caballero with the slouched hat alighted. He is a man of the Conrade type, not more than five feet nine inches in height; but his broad shoulders, great swelling chest, and powerful limbs show that he would be a formidable antagonist to encounter. His face is not strictly handsome, perhaps, but more than good-looking. Black hair and moustache, a clear olive complexion, and regular features, do not of themselves imply anything specially attractive; but the expression of Falcon's fine dark eyes is singularly pleasing. Without aiming at a pun, I might say that they are the eyes of a dove rather than of a falcon. Their too great softness is, however, corrected by the firmness and decision of his mouth; and, to sum up, one may say that Falcon's physiognomy announces him to be manly, courageous, and most humane.

While the president was exchanging recognitions with the crowd around him, my friend Don Fernando V. whispered to me: "There's the man who may truly say, 'Le gouvernement c'est moi,' for he it is who keeps the present party in power, or rather preserves Venezuela from downright anarchy. You know, congress has decreed to him the title of 'Grand Mariscal' of the republic, just as Bolivar was styled the 'Liberator,' and Paez the 'Illustrious Citizen.' Well! Bolivar perished in exile, and almost in want of the necessaries of life. Paez has long been a fugitive. It remains to be seen what will be the fate of the Grand Mariscal."

After the president had greeted his friends, and had been told who I was, he stepped up to me very affably, and inquired if I spoke Spanish. Some of those officious people who are always to be found hovering about a great man like Falcon anticipated my answer for me, and exclaimed that I spoke a little; but added they, "You, general, can speak to him in French." "No," said Falcon, "I have been too long in the mountains; I cannot speak French now." Rather amused at this disclaimer, for the Venezuelans had been boasting to me of their president's knowledge of the language of diplomacy, I said that I hoped to make myself intelligible in Spanish. We then conversed for some time, when, on some one mentioning the disturbances which the president had come from Coro to quell, and calling them a revolution, Falcon turned to him and said, in a very loud and decided tone, "There will be no revolution! The interests at stake are too great to permit of change. Were these troubles to continue now, the coffee and cotton crops would be lost. I have every reason to hope, on the contrary, that the English commissioner will carry good news to his country."

Just at this moment important despatches were brought in, and the president retired with some of the chief officers to another room to discuss them. I remained, and the apartment where I was grew more and more crowded, as fresh people arrived from the estates in the neighbourhood. Many came in uniforms, not unbecoming, though rather bizarre. I was introduced to a number of persons, and amongst them to a Mr. A., who asked me what part of England I came from. I said, "From London," whereupon he exclaimed, "Then I dare say you

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know my family, for they, too, reside in that town." I thought he was joking; but, seeing he looked quite grave, I drew him out a little, and found he had no idea that London was larger than Caracas. As I felt quite sure that he would think me a Munchausen if I told him that the English capital contained three times as many persons as all Venezuela, I maintained a discreet silence on that head. I could, however, hardly keep my countenance when he wrote down his name on paper, and added a memorandum that his family lived in London, and I was to find them out and send him the particulars. Presently one of the company informed me that A.'s father was a sergeant, and rose to be a major in Venezuela, where this son was born.

Meantime, a general of cavalry had been preparing lunch, of which I was glad to partake; and when it was over, and we had betaken ourselves to cigars, an officer came and requested me to go to the president. I found Falcon quite alone, swinging, in his hammock; but on seeing me he sprang up, and made me sit on a bed, while he sat in a chair. I said I had been anxious to see him, in order to learn from his own mouth his sentiments regarding the loan. He replied that, from the communications he had received from General Guzman Blanco, he had no doubt that all would be satisfactorily settled. I dwelt on the importance of a scrupulous adherence to the conditions, and of the government's maintaining its character for good faith. He assented. I then said that I had visited the richest districts in Venezuela, and was quite convinced of the enormous productiveness of the soil; but there were two things wanting, brazos y dinero—"labour and capital." "It appears to me," I continued, "that the Venezuelan government have the means of becoming rich, and of paying off all the debt of the country." "Ah!" said he, "how so, pray?" "By selling," I replied, "a great tract of country to some European company who would send out large bodies of emigrants." He asked me if that proposition came from the English government or from private individuals; and on my telling him, from the latter, he declared that he was most favourable to such an enterprise. "There is," he said, "a tract of country between Maracaybo and Caracas, two hundred leagues long and fifty broad, admirably adapted for cultivation, which might be sold to emigrants." After this we spoke of indifferent subjects, and principally of the chase. He told me he had just killed two large panthers and a puma in the forests of Coro. The puma took refuge in an immense tree, the foliage of which was so thick as almost to conceal it, so that he had had great difficulty in shooting it. Finding that I was fond of sport, he expressed his regret that I had not come to Coro, which, indeed, was entirely his own fault, as he had not invited me. His lunch was now brought in, and he asked me to join him at the table; but I said I had already disposed of my appetite, and I took leave, pleased with his manners, but not too deeply convinced of his sincerity.

On coming out, I was shown the diamond star he wears (which is worth, perhaps, two hundred guineas), and his order of Liberator. "So much," thought I, "for equality, republican simplicity, and all that sort of thing."

THE RACK IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

I AM a plain man, who hates nonsense.

For a man who weighs only a few ounces over nineteen stone it is rather hard to be told by vulgar people, who are intimate enough to take liberties and think they can make jokes, that he must find a way of throwing out some of his ballast. My friend Bumpus tells me that I must dispose of a few pounds of the adipose tissue which I pack under my waistcoat, lace my stays a little tighter, and call upon Mr. Banting.

I say nothing in return. It has been well observed that a man's ability is best found out by noticing what he might have said, and could have said, but didn't say. I have heard how many witty things great men, who also are discreet, abstain from saying; and my friends have never missed a chance that came to hand of telling me that I am a great man.

"Blobb," says my friend Bumpus, who has taken out his freedom of the courtesies because our shops were in the same street, and we left business within two years of one another—"Blobb, you're too fat. You eat too much; you take too little exercise. I see by your gasping at this moment that you'll die of fatty heart, if you don't mind yourself. Fat, don't you know, if you get too much of it, collects about the cockles of the heart, and hinders them from opening their shells—smothers them, in fact. Blobb! you are a mass of cockles; and one of these days you will be smothered."

"Bumpus," I said, "you are unfeeling."

"It's what you'll wish you were. But come, old fellow, I'll give you a chance for twenty years more of life. You won't leave off feeding on potatoes; you will eat bread, and drink beer. Very well, then; eat 'em, and work 'em into muscle. If you want to save your cockles, fall to at your muscles." I believe, upon my honour, that he meant this for a joke. "A lean new year to you," says he, "and more lean years than Pharoah had. Here, Blobb, my boy, I'd be sorry to lose a good neighbour so soon as you seem to be going, and so I shall take the liberty of giving you a Christmas-box."

I had been giving Christmas-boxes all the morning; for it actually was Boxing-day, and this was the only time a similar compliment had been offered to myself. As the compliment represented a rather handsome-looking book, I took it, and said, "Thank you,

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Bumpus." Then I looked at the back, and saw it was a Handbook of Gymnastics and Athletics.

"Now," says he, "Blobb, just make a point of doing regularly, every morning for a few months, some of the exercises set you in this book. I walk, I do; and you'll find my coach-house and stable-yard, just over the way there, fitted up as it ought to be, with help to stretch your limbs instead of help to do without 'em. There's a Rack there, and a Knotted Rope, and a Hanging Plank; besides a Buck, and a Vaulting Horse, and a Climbing Wall, and all that sort of thing, in the yard. The book's a capital one, though taken from a popular German Turnbook, and perhaps a little too much on the German Turn system for your English lazy bones. Look into it after dinner, and come over to me, if you like, every morning, say, at ten. I keep a Director of Exercises instead of a Coachman."

So Bumpus went away, and left the book. And the first Turn it gave me was when first I opened it, and saw it full of awful pictures of men hanging by their legs, like weathercocks from poles, and twisted this way and that, as if suffering all the tortures of the Inquisition. The first bit of reading my eyes lighted on was part of a long chapter on THE RACK, which said, "We divide the exercises at THE RACK into six great groups, viz.:

"1st. Exercises hanging by the upper extremities;

"2nd. Exercises hanging by upper and lower extremities;

"3rd. Exercises hanging by the lower extremities only."

That day I read no more. The bare notion of being exercised on the Rack while hung head downwards, like the prize hog with a rosette in its back at the butcher's shop-door, very nearly took my legs from under me. Next day, as I had nothing else to do, when I had done my newspaper, I resumed Bumpus's book; and as I felt unsteadiness of the legs coming on when I opened it and looked at the pictures, I took four glasses of port wine, according to the saying—one for health, two for cheer, three for my friend, four for my enemy. That enemy is Bumpus, as will presently be made more clear.

Four glasses of port just supplied me with courage enough to read, and I saw—

That this was a book on Gymnastic Exercises, by E. G. Ravenstein, F.R.G.S., &c., President of the German Gymnastic Society, London; and John Hulley, Gymnasiarch, of Liverpool.

That these gentlemen had endeavoured to explain the different exercises as clearly as possible, and without doing violence to the English tongue.

That they had drawn much upon a Turn-book by Mr. A. Ravenstein, of Frankfort-on-the-Maine.

That Gymnasiarchs were much honoured in Ancient Greece.

That the Romans were less refined gymnasts.

That his Majesty, King Teutobach, of the Teutons, vaulted over six horses standing side by side.

That in eighteen hundred and eleven, when the modern Teutons were bowed down under the yoke of a foreign oppressor, the great Jahn, whose aim was to regenerate the people and make them strong enough to break, or agile enough to jump out of, the said yoke, opened the first public Gymnasium near Berlin.

I am myself a Briton, and a single man, under the yoke of no oppressor, foreign or domestic; so I don't want to be taught how to get out of that sort of thing. But I went on to read how Jahn's efforts were successful, and Gymnasia multiplied in Germany, until "the friends of darkness interposed," and in eighteen hundred and eighteen the Gymnasia were shut up by the Police as hotbeds of something or other. Well, Bumpus's Gymnasium, at any rate, is not among his hotbeds. He distinctly told me that he had it in his coach-house and his stable-yard. We are safe against the Powers of Darkness, so far, if they are as hostile to hotbeds in England as in Germany. Jahn was "thrown into prison," but, being a Gymnast, no doubt he came down upon his legs. He was let out in eighteen twenty-five, and lived, my book tells me, to see Gymnastics introduced into the schools by Royal Decree in eighteen 'forty-two, and "societies of young men flourishing all over Germany." No doubt of it. The way the young men of this generation do go flourishing about in society all over England, too, is dreadful to us elderlies. Happily, there is no son of mine among them. From Germany, Gymnastics spread to Denmark; thence to Sweden, where P. H. Ling developed a peculiar system, and especially drew men's attention to the treating of diseases by gymnastic exercise. Into France these Gymnastics were first introduced by Colonel F. Amoros. In England, rowing, cricket, football, and other out-door exercises of the body have long been popular; but the German system of gymnastic training has been only lately introduced by Athletic and Gymnastic Societies, which are now prospering and multiplying in our cities. For their use especially, but also for schools and private students, here (in Bumpus's book) was a treatise with the exercises and positions of the body, on the German system, classified and explained by diagrams and sketches, and so forth, and so forth.

After reading as much as I could, it struck me that it would be a good thing to go over the next day, at ten A.M., to Bumpus's stable, and take a turn upon the Rack; for, after all, the Rack is only a horizontal bar to grasp at and hang from; and although "hanging by the hocks" is one part of the exercise described, I don't admit that I have got hocks, and, if I had, I am not bound to hang myself by them, or in any other way.

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'I went into Bumpus's stable at the stated hour next morning; entered suddenly, and the first thing I got was a tremendous box on the ear from my friend's foot. He was legs up, and astraddle, head down, balanced on the point of a revolving pyramid, and going round like a great bone teetotum. In a moment he flew off his peg, and came round on his feet with a somerset to beg my pardon, and regret that he hadn't eyes in his boots. "It's a mercy," says I, "that you've left eyes in my head." "Now," says he, "what'll you have? Take a Turn-over. Here's my Director of Exercises, the Herr Gymnast Umgedreht, at your service and mine. What'll you take? A Free Exercise for one, or some light little combined exercise for two. Carrying Exercise, if you like—provided you'll carry me."

"Von shingle exercise, dear sir," says Herr Umg——. "Dis shentlemans will take one balancing position so, mid dis leg up so, stand on von leg, so. Now on von leg, tiptoe—stand! Vare good; balance mid arms, before falling into fundamental position—ah! you are down on your broad back. Good. Stand not up. Here is von goot exercise to lie on back and rise widout using de hands. You cannot. Well den, see how I get you up. I stride over your neck, I grasp your legs. Now grasp you my legs. Now wheel so. You are heavy, but I am strong. Wheel u—u—ugh, round you go, and now I have you on my shoulder. Do I totter? No. You shall stand upon my head and waggle, and I will so balance that you shall not be able to tumble. Or this you shall do to me. See." The fellow hooked one of his feet in my neck, stuck the other against my knee, and threw himself out afloat in the air at right angles to my body. Then down he came on his legs again, and begged that I would do the same by him. Before I could answer him, he was hoisting me over his shoulders, preparatory to spinning me like a teetotum, heels upwards.

"Put me down," I roared. Down I was in an instant, and Meinherr was again flying over my head, to alight, grinning like a monkey, on the back of the wooden machine they call a Vaulting Horse. What appeared to me was, that this maniac seized upon me as if I were a new gymnastic property, to be lifted and jumped about. In half a minute he had got me in the air, seated on both his hands, and had hurled me—well, I am happy to say that he hurled me upon the toes of Bumpus, who had just come down from the Rack, and was laughing demoniacally as he danced up and down before me. "Enough," I remarked, by way of apology to him. "If ever you catch me taking a turn over to your stable again, you and that fellow may play shuttlecock with me for the rest of your existence." I went home, and have set down what you see here. There's only one conclusion I could come to, which is to have no more of this nonsense. The thing is overdone. Bumpus overdoes it. Boating, cricketing, and hunting men overdo it. Young fellows at college overdo it, and some of them get injured for life. *I* won't do it again.

HOLIDAY ROMANCE.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

IN FOUR PARTS.

PART II.

ROMANCE. FROM THE PEN OF MISS ALICE RAINBIRD.*

THERE was once a King, and he had a Queen; and he was the manliest of his sex, and she was the loveliest of hers. The King was, in his private profession, Under Government. The Queen's father had been a medical man out of town.

They had nineteen children, and were always having more. Seventeen of these children took care of the baby, and Alicia, the eldest, took care of them all. Their ages varied from seven years to seven months.

Let us now resume our story.

One day the King was going to the Office, when he stopped at the fishmonger's to buy a pound and a half of salmon not too near the tail, which the Queen (who was a careful housekeeper) had requested him to send home. Mr. Pickles, the fishmonger, said, "Certainly, sir, is there any other article, good morning."

The King went on towards the Office in a melancholy mood, for Quarter Day was such a long way off, and several of the dear children were growing out of their clothes. He had not proceeded far, when Mr. Pickles's errand boy came running after him, and said, "Sir, you didn't notice the old lady in our shop."

"What old lady?" inquired the King. "I saw none."

Now, the King had not seen any old lady, because this old lady had been invisible to him, though visible to Mr. Pickles's boy. Probably because he messed and splashed the water about to that degree, and flopped the pairs of soles down in that violent manner, that, if she had not been visible to him, he would have spoilt her clothes.

Just then the old lady came trotting up. She was dressed in shot-silk of the richest quality, smelling of dried lavender.

"King Watkins the First, I believe?" said the old lady.

"Watkins," replied the King, "is my name."

"Papa, if I am not mistaken, of the beautiful Princess Alicia?" said the old lady.

"And of eighteen other darlings," replied the King.

"Listen. You are going to the Office," said the old lady.

It instantly flashed upon the King that she must be a Fairy, or how could she know that?

"You are right," said the old lady, answering his thoughts, "I am the Good Fairy Grand-

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* Aged Seven.

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marina. Attend. When you return home to dinner, politely invite the Princess Alicia to have some of the salmon you bought just now."

"It may disagree with her," said the King.

The old lady became so very angry at this absurd idea, that the King was quite alarmed, and humbly begged her pardon.

"We hear a great deal too much about this thing disagreeing and that thing disagreeing," said the old lady, with the greatest contempt it was possible to express. "Don't be greedy. I think you want it all yourself."

The King hung his head under this reproof, and said he wouldn't talk about things disagreeing, any more.

"Be good then," said the Fairy Grandmarina, "and don't! When the beautiful Princess Alicia consents to partake of the salmon—as I think she will—you will find she will leave a fish-bone on her plate. Tell her to dry it, and to rub it, and to polish it till it shines like mother-of-pearl, and to take care of it as a present from me."

"Is that all?" asked the King.

"Don't be impatient, sir," returned the Fairy Grandmarina, scolding him severely. "Don't catch people short, before they have done speaking. Just the way with you grown-up persons. You are always doing it."

The King again hung his head, and said he wouldn't do so any more.

"Be good then," said the Fairy Grandmarina, "and don't! Tell the Princess Alicia, with my love, that the fish-bone is a magic present which can only be used once; but that it will bring her, that once, whatever she wishes for, PROVIDED SHE WISHES FOR IT AT THE RIGHT TIME. That is the message. Take care of it."

The King was beginning, "Might I ask the reason——?" When the Fairy became absolutely furious.

"*Will* you be good, sir?" she exclaimed, stamping her foot on the ground. "The reason for this, and the reason for that, indeed! You are always wanting the reason. No reason. There! Hoity toity me! I am sick of your grown-up reasons."

The King was extremely frightened by the old lady's flying into such a passion, and said he was very sorry to have offended her, and he wouldn't ask for reasons any more.

"Be good then," said the old lady, "and don't!"

With those words, Grandmarina vanished, and the King went on and on and on, till he came to the Office. There he wrote and wrote and wrote, till it was time to go home again. Then he politely invited the Princess Alicia, as the Fairy had directed him, to partake of the salmon. And when she had enjoyed it very much, he saw the fish-bone on her plate, as the Fairy had told him he would, and he delivered the Fairy's message, and the Princess Alicia took care to dry the bone, and to rub it, and to polish it till it shone like mother-of-pearl.

And so when the Queen was going to get up in the morning, she said, "O dear me, dear me, my head, my head!" And then she fainted away.

The Princess Alicia, who happened to be looking in at the chamber door, asking about breakfast, was very much alarmed when she saw her Royal Mamma in this state, and she rang the bell for Peggy—which was the name of the Lord Chamberlain. But remembering where the smelling-bottle was, she climbed on a chair and got it, and after that she climbed on another chair by the bedside and held the smelling-bottle to the Queen's nose, and after that she jumped down and got some water, and after that she jumped up again and wetted the Queen's forehead, and, in short, when the Lord Chamberlain came in, that dear old woman said to the little Princess, "What a Trot you are! I couldn't have done it better myself!"

But that was not the worst of the good Queen's illness. O no! She was very ill indeed, for a long time. The Princess Alicia kept the seventeen young Princes and Princesses quiet, and dressed and undressed and danced the baby, and made the kettle boil, and heated the soup, and swept the hearth, and poured out the medicine, and nursed the Queen, and did all that ever she could, and was as busy busy busy, as busy could be. For there were not many servants at that Palace, for three reasons; because the King was short of money, because a rise in his office never seemed to come, and because quarter-day was so far off that it looked almost as far off and as little as one of the stars.

But on the morning when the Queen fainted away, where was the magic fish-bone? Why, there it was in the Princess Alicia's pocket. She had almost taken it out to bring the Queen to life again, when she put it back, and looked for the smelling-bottle.

After the Queen had come out of her swoon that morning, and was dozing, the Princess Alicia hurried up-stairs to tell a most particular secret to a most particularly confidential friend of hers, who was a Duchess. People did suppose her to be a Doll, but she was really a Duchess, though nobody knew it except the Princess.

This most particular secret was a secret about the magic fish-bone, the history of which was well known to the Duchess, because the Princess told her everything. The Princess kneeled down by the bed on which the Duchess was lying, full dressed and wide-awake, and whispered the secret to her. The Duchess smiled and nodded. People might have supposed that she never smiled and nodded, but she often did, though nobody knew it except the Princess.

Then the Princess Alicia hurried down-stairs again, to keep watch in the Queen's room. She often kept watch by herself in the Queen's room; but every evening, while the illness lasted, she sat there watching with the King. And every evening the King sat looking at her with a cross look, wondering why she never brought out the magic fish-bone. As often as she noticed this, she ran up-stairs, whispered the secret to the Duchess over again, and said to the Duchess

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besides, "They think we children never have a reason or a meaning!" And the Duchess, though the most fashionable Duchess that ever was heard of, winked her eye.

"Alicia," said the King, one evening when she wished him Good Night.

"Yes, Papa."

"What is become of the magic fish-bone?"

"In my pocket, Papa."

"I thought you had lost it?"

"O no, Papa!"

"Or forgotten it?"

"No, indeed, Papa!"

And so another time the dreadful little snapping pug-dog next door made a rush at one of the young Princes as he stood on the steps coming home from school, and terrified him out of his wits, and he put his hand through a pane of glass, and bled bled bled. When the seventeen other young Princes and Princesses saw him bleed bleed bleed, they were terrified out of their wits too, and screamed themselves black in their seventeen faces all at once. But the Princes Alicia put her hands over all their seventeen mouths, one after another, and persuaded them to be quiet because of the sick Queen. And then she put the wounded Prince's hand in a basin of fresh cold water, while they stared with their twice seventeen are thirty-four put down four and carry three eyes, and then she looked in the hand for bits of glass, and there were fortunately no bits of glass there. And then she said to two chubby-legged Princes who were sturdy though small, "Bring me in the Royal rag-bag; I must snip and stitch and cut and contrive." So those two young Princes tugged at the Royal rag-bag and lugged it in, and the Princess Alicia sat down on the floor with a large pair of scissors and a needle and thread, and snipped and stitched and cut and contrived, and made a bandage and put it on, and it fitted beautifully, and so when it was all done she saw the King her Papa looking on by the door.

"Alicia."

"Yes, Papa."

"What have you been doing?"

"Snipping stitching cutting and contriving, Papa."

"Where is the magic fish-bone?"

"In my pocket, Papa."

"I thought you had lost it?"

"O no, Papa."

"Or forgotten it?"

"No, indeed, Papa!"

After that, she ran up-stairs to the Duchess and told her what had passed, and told her the secret over again, and the Duchess shook her flaxen curls and laughed with her rosy lips.

Well! and so another time the baby fell under the grate. The seventeen young Princes and Princesses were used to it, for they were almost always falling under the grate or down the stairs, but the baby was not used to it yet, and it gave him a swelled face and a black eye. The way the poor little darling came to tumble was, that he slid out of the Princess Alicia's lap just as she was sitting in a great coarse apron that quite smothered her, in front of the kitchen fire, beginning to peel the turnips for the broth for dinner; and the way she came to be doing that was, that the King's cook had run away that morning with her own true love who was a very tall but very tipsy soldier. Then, the seventeen young Princes and Princesses, who cried at everything that happened, cried and roared. But the Princess Alicia (who couldn't help crying a little herself) quietly called to them to be still, on account of not throwing back the Queen up-stairs, who was fast getting well, and said, "Hold your tongues you wicked little monkeys, every one of you, while I examine baby!" Then she examined baby, and found that he hadn't broken anything, and she held cold iron to his poor dear eye, and smoothed his poor dear face, and he presently fell asleep in her arms. Then, she said to the seventeen Princes and Princesses, "I am afraid to lay him down yet, lest he should wake and feel pain, be good and you shall all be cooks." They jumped for joy when they heard that, and began making themselves cooks' caps out of old newspapers. So to one she gave the salt box, and to one she gave the barley, and to one she gave the herbs, and to one she gave the turnips, and to one she gave the carrots, and to one she gave the onions, and to one she gave the spice-box, till they were all cooks, and all running about at work, she sitting in the middle smothered in the great coarse apron, nursing baby. By-and-by the broth was done, and the baby woke up smiling like an angel, and was trusted to the sedatest Princess to hold, while the other Princes and Princesses were squeezed into a far-off corner to look at the Princess Alicia turning out the saucepan-full of broth, for fear (as they were always getting into trouble) they should get splashed and scalded. When the broth came tumbling out, steaming beautifully, and smelling like a nosegay good to eat, they clapped their hands. That made the baby clap his hands; and that, and his looking as if he had a comic toothache, made all the Princes and Princesses laugh. So the Princess Alicia said, "Laugh and be good, and after dinner we will make him a nest on the floor in a corner, and he shall sit in his nest and see a dance of eighteen cooks." That delighted the young Princes and Princesses, and they ate up all the broth, and washed up all the plates and dishes, and cleared away, and pushed the table into a corner, and then they in their cooks' caps, and the Princess Alicia in the smothering coarse apron that belonged to the cook that had run away with her own true love that was the very tall but very tipsy soldier, danced a dance of eighteen cooks before the angelic baby, who forgot his swelled face and his black eye, and crowed with joy.

And so then, once more the Princess Alicia saw King Watkins the First, her father, standing in the doorway looking on, and he said:

"What have you been doing, Alicia?"

"Cooking and contriving, Papa."

"What else have you been doing, Alicia?"

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"Keeping the children light-hearted, Papa."

"Where is the magic fish-bone, Alicia?"

"In my pocket, Papa."

"I thought you had lost it?"

"O no, Papa."

"Or forgotten it?"

"No, indeed, Papa."

The King then sighed so heavily, and seemed so low-spirited, and sat down so miserably, leaning his head upon his hand, and his elbow upon the kitchen table pushed away in the corner, that the seventeen Princes and Princesses crept softly out of the kitchen, and left him alone with the Princess Alicia and the angelic baby.

"What is the matter, Papa?"

"I am dreadfully poor, my child."

"Have you no money at all, Papa?"

"None my child."

"Is there no way left of getting any, Papa?"

"No way," said the King. "I have tried very hard, and I have tried all ways."

When she heard those last words, the Princess Alicia began to put her hand into the pocket where she kept the magic fish-bone.

"Papa," said she, "when we have tried very hard, and tried all ways, we must have done our very very best?"

"No doubt, Alicia."

"When we have done our very very best, Papa, and that is not enough, then I think the right time must have come for asking help of others." This was the very secret connected with the magic fish-bone, which she had found out for herself from the good fairy Grandmarina's words, and which she had so often whispered to her beautiful and fashionable friend the Duchess.

So she took out of her pocket the magic fish-bone that had been dried and rubbed and polished till it shone like mother-of-pearl, and she gave it one little kiss and wished it was quarter day. And immediately it *was* Quarter Day, and the King's quarter's salary came rattling down the chimney, and bounced into the middle of the floor.

But this was not half of what happened, no not a quarter, for immediately afterwards the good fairy Grandmarina came riding in, in a carriage and four (Peacocks), with Mr. Pickles's boy up behind, dressed in silver and gold, with a cocked hat, powdered hair, pink silk stockings, a jewelled cane, and a nosegay. Down jumped Mr. Pickles's boy with his cocked hat in his hand and wonderfully polite (being entirely changed by enchantment), and handed Grandmarina out, and there she stood in her rich shot silk smelling of dried lavender, fanning herself with a sparkling fan.

"Alicia, my dear," said this charming old Fairy, "how do you do, I hope I see you pretty well, give me a kiss."

The Princess Alicia embraced her, and then Grandmarina turned to the King, and said rather sharply:—"Are you good?"

The King said he hoped so.

"I suppose you know the reason, *now*, why my god-Daughter here," kissing the Princess again, "did not apply to the fish-bone sooner?" said the Fairy.

The King made her a shy bow.

"Ah! But you didn't *then!*" said the Fairy.

The King made her a shyer bow.

"Any more reasons to ask for?" said the Fairy.

The King said no, and he was very sorry.

"Be good then," said the Fairy, "and live happy ever afterwards."

Then, Grandmarina waved her fan, and the Queen came in most splendidly dressed, and the seventeen young Princes and Princesses, no longer grown out of their clothes, came in newly fitted out from top to toe, with tucks in everything to admit of its being let out. After that, the Fairy tapped the Princess Alicia with her fan, and the smothering coarse apron flew away, and she appeared exquisitely dressed, like a little Bride, with a wreath of orange-flowers and a silver veil. After that, the kitchen dresser changed of itself into a wardrobe, made of beautiful woods and gold and looking-glass, which was full of dresses of all sorts, all for her and all exactly fitting her. After that, the angelic baby came in, running alone, with his face and eye not a bit the worse but much the better. Then, Grandmarina begged to be introduced to the Duchess, and when the Duchess was brought down many compliments passed between them.

A little whispering took place between the Fairy and the Duchess, and then the Fairy said out loud, "Yes. I thought she would have told you." Grandmarina then turned to the King and Queen, and said, "We are going in search of Prince Certainpersonio. The pleasure of your company is requested at church in half an hour precisely." So she and the Princess Alicia got into the carriage, and Mr. Pickles's boy handed in the Duchess who sat by herself on the opposite seat, and then Mr. Pickles's boy put up the steps and got up behind, and the Peacocks flew away with their tails spread.

Prince Certainpersonio was sitting by himself, eating barley-sugar and waiting to be ninety. When he saw the Peacocks followed by the carriage, coming in at the window, it immediately occurred to him that something uncommon was going to happen.

"Prince," said Grandmarina, "I bring you your Bride."

The moment the Fairy said those words, Prince Certainpersonio's face left off being stickey, and his jacket and corduroys changed to peach-bloom velvet, and his hair curled, and a cap and feather flew in like a bird and settled on his head. He got into the carriage by the Fairy's invitation, and there he renewed his acquaintance with the Duchess whom he had seen before.

In the church were the Prince's relations and friends, and the Princess Alicia's relations and friends, and the seventeen Princes and Princesses, and the baby, and a crowd of the neighbours. The marriage was beautiful beyond expression. The Duchess was bridesmaid, and beheld the ceremony from the pulpit where she was supported by the cushion of the desk.

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Grandmarina gave a magnificent wedding feast afterwards, in which there was everything and more to eat, and everything and more to drink. The wedding cake was delicately ornamented with white satin ribbons, frosted silver and white lilies, and was forty-two yards round.

When Grandmarina had drunk her love to the young couple, and Prince Certainpersonio had made a speech, and everybody had cried Hip Hip Hip Hurrah! Grandmarina announced to the King and Queen that in future there would be eight Quarter Days in every year, except in leap year, when there would be ten. She then turned to Certainpersonio and Alicia, and said, "My dears, you will have thirty-five children, and they will all be good and beautiful. Seventeen of your children will be boys, and eighteen will be girls. The hair of the whole of your children will curl naturally. They will never have the measles, and will have recovered from the whooping-cough before being born."

On hearing such good news, everybody cried out "Hip Hip Hip Hurrah!" again.

"It only remains," said Grandmarina in conclusion, "to make an end of the fish-bone."

So she took it from the hand of the Princess Alicia, and it instantly flew down the throat of the dreadful little snapping pug-dog next door and choked him, and he expired in convulsions.

ON BEING CUT.

"My dear, have you heard the news? Mrs. Blank was cut yesterday on parade."

What had Mrs. Blank done, that no one would speak to her? She might have gone to Captain Noname's bungalow openly in the sight of gods and men: ladies commit such mistakes sometimes in India, and pay the penalty resulting—and know why they pay it. Or, it might have been reported that she had gone; and reports do quite as well as truth for the whetstone of the scalping-knife. In which case she would understand no more than her own baby why the brigadier's wife was suddenly afflicted with short-sightedness and manual paralysis, as she held out her hand for the usual evening greeting; and why the major's four daughters had all stiff necks, and looked as if they had been dining on sour limes when she bowed to them in her airy, smiling, careless way as she passed; why the bandsmen glanced cunningly, and nudged each other slyly; while the subs looked knowing, and one or two of the more objectionable kind addressed her with a contemptuous familiarity that brought the blood to her cheeks. It may, of course, be that conscience lent her a burning torch by which to read the meaning of her uncomfortable reception, and that she knows she must either bow her head to the storm or brazen it out, according as she is disposed by nature and nerve. It will not much signify what she does, poor soul! The thunderbolt has been launched, and, innocent or guilty, she must bear the mark of the burn to the end of her life. She has been cut; and though the wound may be healed over, as wounds do heal over, yet the scar will remain, and will never quite cease to ache.

I remember a case, when I was a girl, which was a good lesson as to the expediency of keeping strictly to one's own business. A certain Miss Jones (not to be too explicit), a girl of our own age and standing, got into terrible disrepute in the neighbourhood where we all lived. Her story was considered a bad one. It was the scandal of the day. Wherever you saw three or four men congregated together, and speaking in veiled voices—wherever there was a cluster of women's heads bent inward to an imaginary centre, like sheep before a storm—there you might be sure the crimes and improprieties of Miss Jones were in full swing of discussion and reprobation. People began to look coldly and more coldly on her; she was left out of every party; she was visited with increasing rareness; and at last it was resolved that she should be publicly cut. Accordingly, Miss Jones was cut. This seemed to one of her young friends and companions dreadfully unfair. This friend was a blundering, honest-hearted young person, enthusiastic for truth and fair-dealing, and constitutionally unable to foresee personal difficulties as the result of inconsiderate action. So she took it on herself to enlighten Miss Jones as to reasons why, to give her an opportunity of defending herself. For she did not believe the public report, and, girl-like, thought the world cruel and the friend faultless. She told her story; and got the reward righteously apportioned to rashness. She might as well have upset a cauldron of oil into a furnace, and have expected it to prove a patent fire-annihilator as to have thought that she was preparing a way of peace by telling truth and the reports.

Miss Jones had a mother; a small, tightly framed old lady, with a sharp nose and a pointed chin, small red-brown eyes, and a shrill voice. Miss Jones herself, with her resolute lips, was no coward, and could stand to her guns manfully. They both did battle. Calls were made on all the gentry round, and letters were written; reports were sifted, but the sifting came to worse than nothing, and had better have been left alone; counter-accusations were made; and there was a general outcry of the pot against all kettles. In short, the whole amount of defensive artillery practicable for the occasion was employed: to no good: Miss Jones was cut, and the wound would not reunite, although the sharp-eyed lady-mother passed three-fourths of her time in the office of the local lawyer, not averse to business. Perhaps there would have been the same confusion had any one at that hill station told pretty little Mrs. Blank why she was cut on parade.

Some cuts are given in pure mistake and misapprehension. Some years ago, a young English girl was staying with some friends at a small French village—one of those villages where everybody knows the business of every-

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body else, and where there are crowds of eyes to watch all men's—and specially all women's—doings. This young English girl was somewhat of an Amazonian—not at all a jeune Meess of the sentimental and "shocking" school, but a frank, free, courageous girl, given to an unconventional breadth of action not a little perplexing to the more tightly bandaged French mind. Thus, anything extreme could easily be attached to her name; and her character itself was a nest wherein reports of the wildest eccentricity could be fledged, and whence they could take flight. Suddenly a whisper went through this small French world; the whisper became a buzz; the buzz grew into a voice—a dozen voices; and an audible, intelligible, and tangible report was shaped out of the wordy cloud that the jeune meess amused herself by nightly prowlings in the little village and its environs; for what purpose of course there were only too many likely conjectures handy. At last the friends who stood as the girl's social sponsors heard this report; and being energetic people, good at winnowing testimony, they set to work to sift it; and they certainly sifted it very fine indeed. But, sift as they would, they could never break up that central clump round which all the rest had crystallised, namely, that Meess Blank had been seen continually at midnight passing under the arch of the viaduct on her way to the upper part of the town. There was no doubt about it: it was her straw bonnet and her blue veil, her long brown ringlets, her "step of grenadier;" and let madame and monsieur, her social sponsors, answer it to their own knowledge of the world, what of good could a young meess of well-regulated morals be doing out alone, prowling about the upper part of the town at midnight? Meess Blank must be cut. And cut she was; for all that she had been in bed and asleep, as a good girl should have been, on all those midnights when it had been said that she had been met prowling about the town in her straw bonnet and blue veil, and with her long brown ringlets floating round her shoulders. The mystery of the false presentation was never solved, and her denial was never believed; but that was the simple truth, credited or not. Some one had aped her costume and general appearance; and thus the real sinner went scathless, and the innocent victim got scalped in her stead.

"There is no smoke without some flame." Granted in a certain sense and to a certain degree; by no means granted broadly and without restrictions. For instance, given the flame of "fast" tendencies—say a habit of speech sprinkled with slang, a liking for cigarettes held with an air and drawn with gusto, and a decidedly picturesque, not to say startling, costume; and you may create a smoke of scandal as thick and black as pitch, and as hard to wash off, when it has once stuck. Yet there is nothing essentially immoral in any of Nicotina's proceedings. The same with dress. A mantilla, or a yashmak, or a porkpie hat, or crinoline, or pre-Raffaelite trains, or high boots tasselled and heeled, or satin slippers without heels, and sandalled—what does it matter? There is no absolute crime (though there may be very great stupidity) in these things. It is a matter of locality and custom from first to last; and though we may question the sense, and deny the charm, of "fast" fashions for ladies, we ought not to confound a question of taste with a question of morals. And yet we do. Poor Nicotina might as well have been caught shoplifting or pocket-picking. Her star has gone out from the horizon of the stricter sort, and before the week is out she will be cut, with greater or less severity, according to the extent to which tight-lacing is carried by the community of censors. For some societies lace very tightly indeed; and if Nicotina falls among such as these, she may look out for a stinging file of scalping-knives, point downwards, well sharpened, and unerring in aim.

I am not defending feeble mimicry of the habits of men in the conduct of women. I should like to utilise Nicotina's cigarette-box for the destruction of the green fly among my geraniums, but I would not cut her. There are two reasons why I would not cut her, and why I would even do my best to reform and defend her. One is because I do not think her bad taste, though abominable in itself, deserves so severe a punishment; and the other is, because an imprudence, when treated as a crime, does really grow into one, however innocent it was in the beginning. Nicotina, cut for foolish fastness, and cast adrift from all wholesome anchorage, is pretty sure to shoot Niagara in the kind of half-defying revenge so common to those who are treated with undue and, therefore, exasperating severity.

But there are not only the causes of cutting to be considered; there are also the ways and modes, which vary as much as tempers vary. Some people cut you with what the French would call une franchise brutale. These are the people who know you quite well, who are neither nervous nor shortsighted, nor given to open-eyed dreaming, nor in any way likely to forget their world and overlook society. You go up to these people—smiling, easy, unsuspecting; and you are cut. Two eyes look at you coldly, fixedly; a living face stiffens into a mask: perhaps the lips of the mask have curled themselves into a slight sneer, perhaps they remain loose and expressionless, perhaps they close themselves tight and hard. Any one of these three expressions may be adopted, but the face will be a mask still, and the two eyes will be simply glass balls deftly coloured, but with no soul looking through. That is the cut direct—never mind the cause—and you may get over it, if you can. If you can, I should say that the steel was not forged which *could* cut you.

Then there is the cut indirect; the cut which leaves a loophole for explanation, and a way of escape by apology and excuse; the cut which consists, first of all, in a shuffling away from you across the road, to the other end of the room, out at the door, into the garden; the cut that is betokened by a sudden desire to

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look exactly in the opposite direction to that in which you are advancing, and that finds an absorbing interest in a shop-window. This is a very elastic kind of cutting, and can be made to mean everything or nothing at the cutter's pleasure. The only way to meet this manner of cut is by one of its own kind—a profound interest in some object to the side, or in the distance—eyes staring vacantly into the world of shadows, and therefore unable to discern the forms of men; and then, if the thing is a mistake, and has been unintentional or untenable—"My dear Blank, how glad I am to meet you! Where on earth did you spring from? and where have you been all this time? Why have you not hunted me up? I thought you had forgotten me, or that you intended to cut me!"

Then there is the manner of cutting which is according to the law of dropping water, wearing away stones by time and persistency. The greetings in the market-place are made with all proper conventional forms, but with gradually decreasing warmth nicely adjusted, till at last they come to be mere simulacra of greetings, and, finally, are dropped altogether, and give no sign of life again. But a long process has to be passed through before you come to this; and it may be that the final cut, which takes some people about three-quarters of a minute to give, occupies these others for months, lengthening into years. It is not at all necessary that you should understand what has been your offence, and why the hands which once met yours frankly enough now fold themselves coldly away, and avoid the most fleeting touch, dreading degradation. Perhaps you have stood on the wrong side in some political question. Or you may think for yourself, and apart from the general ruck of mankind, on some point of social morality—the marriage laws, universal suffrage, or the uses of bishops and the good of primogeniture; and, if so, do you wonder that you should be anathema maranatha to your opponents? Or you may sit under a different spiritual ministration; and then, as you may be sure you will "go under" when the time comes, it is of no use to look for recognition now. Still, as nothing of all this is so flagrant as Mrs. Blank's mistake between Captain Noname's bungalow and her husband's home, nor even so defiant of observances as Nicotina's fastness and folly, the cutters of the class under present consideration have not such a good case to go upon. They are obliged to content themselves with gradual decline, and death by atrophy, and the final severance coming by force of natural laws and the weakness consequent on long abrasion. All is done quietly, easily, with a gliding step and perfectly graduated action, affording no salient point on which to hang a remonstrance, and no definite moment wherein to fire off an explosion. You cannot help yourself. You are in the hands of the smiter, and you must bend your neck to the blow. Why not set the executioner at defiance? you may say. I can only answer: If you are strong enough to defy the public opinion of your own neighbourhood, you are far above any necessity for reading this article. Let us cut each other, my dear sir, and have done with it!

THE DEAR GIRL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BELLA DONNA," "NEVER FORGOTTEN," &c.

CHAPTER XXXIX. FORGIVEN.

THE disastrous news went about that the sacred English, who had now escaped for nearly twenty-four hours, had been attacked with the epidemic. This was indeed a shock. Old Captain Filby had been surprised, and was lying on his back in his cheap apartments, in the agonies of the malady. Neither Dr. Macan, nor Mr. Blacker, nor Harcourt Dacres, nor any of his friends who had seen him in his pink under-waistcoat at the ball only a few hours before, would have known him, so wofully was his countenance altered. But there was no one to try that experiment. The "brandy" face was shrunken and hollow, and nearly blue, the teeth chattering. No one came to see him, nor to sit by him; and, in the intensity of his sufferings, he poured out some strong maledictions on this desertion.

That wicked graceless old man's life was now to close. Selfish, querulous, coarse, cruel, merciless himself, he could reasonably expect no sympathy nor pity; and about five o'clock that evening, with the steel-grey clouds of Dieppe settling down slowly, the cold began to steal up his wicked old limbs—to stiffen the lips that, even then, were muttering wailings at his agony. With the bonne standing at the door in terror, half inclined to fly, yet fascinated by the horror of the spectacle, the old sinner grumbled himself out of this world.

Strange to say, after this first victim, no other English seemed required, for the present; and the whole of that night went over without any one being touched. This was more remarkable as the mere natives were being swept off wholesale. At six o'clock, the mayor received news that the juge de paix was ill; an hour later, that the commander of the military was lying stricken at the barracks. Who knows? the maire's turn might come at any moment.

As West was going along, with a lighter step, and certainly with more purpose in his mind, than ever he had had before, he heard a soft step behind him. Some one was running to overtake him. He certainly could never have dreamed of *that* encounter—clasping his hand in both hers, and with tears streaming from her soft eyes.

"Lucy! *You!*"

There was nothing harsh in his voice. With the surprising instinct which comes in situations that are intensely dramatic, he knew all—knew what she was about to tell. It was in her repentant and even loving face, and in her first broken word: "Can you ever forgive me?"

She was beside him, pouring out all her explanation, her previous ignorance of what Con-

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stance had told her. But, alas! she could not explain away the great act she was about to undertake.

"I know," she said, "your nobleness and generosity. You have overpowered and humiliated me. I see how much you are above me. Oh, had I but known all this in time!"

"No matter now," he said, gently; "it was my folly and stupidity."

"No," said Lucy, eagerly, "but my dull incapability of appreciating your delicacy. I took everything literally. I thought, when you went away, that you meant me, really, to decide for myself, and if I did not find that I was growing to like and love you, that you yourself would not be content. I declare solemnly that this was what was in my mind. I was a foolish school-girl then, and took everything to the very letter. Then there was this storm, and the saving of the sailors, and I was——"

"You were dazzled. Most natural. I suppose I was not young enough to dazzle, and too sober. There was the mistake."

"No, no," she said, passionately; "that had nothing to do with it. You must not think that. When you went away, I solemnly looked forward to being happy with you. I was sure of it. But then, when you returned, and they told me what seemed to me cruel and unkind things —you know I am a little quick in temper—I was too quick to defend myself."

"You should not have believed them," he said, gently. "You might have known me better. I your enemy? Impossible!"

"I was foolish and childish."

"And your head was full of this other brilliant man. Well," he said, sadly, "this is only the old, old story. Yet I cannot tell you what comfort it is to me to hear all this—that there has been misconception."

"Oh! and you must get well and strong, and be cheerful and happy again. For what am I," added Lucy, in her vehement way, "to cause any trouble or grief to any one—an untrained, uninformed, and, I am afraid, selfish school-girl, with no gifts of any kind? Oh! if you will only let me always see you, and know you, and like you, as I did of old: if you will only let me strive to repair what I have done, and show you how sincerely I have always loved and respected you—will you? And we shall be so happy, one day."

She looked at him wistfully, and with such pleading eyes, that something like hope and peace seemed to come to him. He was about to speak, with the old smile on his lips, when Lucy heard a step, and, looking round, saw with affright the tall, grim figure standing behind them. They were now almost at his door.

"So you come to him with soft promises, now that you have worked his ruin. Leave us! Do not listen to her wicked words, Gilbert. And I tell you this besides, Lucy Dacres, it will not help you, nor save you. Such heathenish and wicked cruelty as yours is not to be passed by without punishment. Vengeance will come, sooner or later, never fear."

Lucy looked frightened, and shrank away.

"Hush, Margaret," said West, angrily. "There is no need of speaking in that way. No one wants vengeance. We have been both victims of a mistake."

It would be hard to describe Margaret's scornful laugh.

"So, on the eve of her marriage, she wishes to leave all smooth—to leave everything happily settled behind her by a few soft words. But it will not do—it will not do. Take care, Lucy Dacres! I tell you, you shall not escape."

There was so much menace, so much of prophecy that might be fulfilled, that Lucy's heart was struck with a chill.

"What do you mean?" she said, trembling. "I have done *you* no harm, and meant no harm."

"Hush!" said he, kindly. "All will be well. Margaret's love for me makes her judge severely of every one. Now, dear Lucy, I will not keep you any longer. You have taken a load off my heart. Every wish and prayer for happiness attend you."

Again Margaret laughed. "Heaven will not join in that blessing."

CHAPTER XL. SISTER NEMESIS.

When Lucy flew away, not a little disturbed by Margaret's look of hate, Gilbert went in with his sister. He was struck with the strange change in her face, and spoke to her kindly; but she answered bitterly:

"So it is fixed for the morning. They are determined to go on with it, with scenes of death multiplied about them. It is indecent. But they will bring down judgment on themselves."

There was silence for a moment; then he answered, softly:

"My dear Margaret, I want to speak to you very seriously. You know what has gone on for these past weeks and months. You have seen my humiliation and infatuation, and I know how it has distressed and affected you——"

"It was not your fault," she interrupted. "Do not think it, Gilbert. I never thought so, nor blamed you. We have suffered, God knows, but you were not accountable. Those who are will be punished, never fear. It is coming—coming."

"No, no!" said he, gently. "Nothing is coming. I want no one punished; certainly, not her, poor child! Child, indeed! I am afraid, if we were to decide who has been the child in this matter, I should——" Then, suddenly, "Oh! when I think, Margaret, of what I have seen to-night, and the scenes about us, and of the great business of life—the hours wasted so selfishly on my own sorrows—I feel ashamed and humiliated. What I would wish now is, to shake off this folly which has held me so long; and I look to you, Margaret, and to Constance to aid me."

Margaret had risen, and was pacing the room pensively.

"I know what that means," she went on presently. "You have found a new path: take

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it then, Gilbert—but it is unkind and cruel of you. You never felt for me as I feel for you—I, whose heart has bled for you. You have no sympathy for *me!* Never mind! perhaps you are weary of me; and as you would take a new course, then take it without me, with all my heart. I little thought *this* was in store for me to-night——"

"But, Margaret, dearest," he said; "this is incomprehensible——"

Again she interrupted him:

"Do as you like—do as you will. You are weak enough to forgive. That is *your* excuse. But, understand, I do not change."

She passed from the room. He heard her door close upon her. Her strange words troubled him. That night he did not see her again. And yet, disturbed and distressed as he was, it was the most tranquil he had passed for a long time. The hideous nightmare, that had preyed on him, had passed away. A hundred times he found himself strangely wondering at himself. It seemed like a dream from which he had just awakened. He knew Margaret's nature well—that it was upright and honourable, though violent and fitful—and in time all her natural resentment would pass by.

That had been a feverish, hurried day for all the leading actors in this little history. Lucy, inexpressibly comforted by the soothing effects of her visit, applied herself to her preparations. Mr. Dacres, in spite of his dread of infection, went about with an affectation of enormous business. Vivian, now cheerful and with an air of relief, had finished his preparations. He was to sail in two days for Brighton, and would thence post with all despatch down to Southampton, where he would catch the Duchess of Kent, sailing on the fatal day. It was a time of union and separation, of sorrow and of joy. Yet everything had come about at last in the happiest way. All was well, because ending well, and because thought for so long to be not likely to end well. Mr. Dacres was going to do "the handsome thing." The handsome thing was a visit, of amende to "poor West." Margaret saw him come in, and went past with a smile described by Mr. Dacres as sufficient "to sour a gallon of milk." Then he went off gaily "to charter," as he called it, the Rev. Mr. Penny, who was delighted at the coming ceremony. Then he had to see "Shabbow, at the restywrong," about the little breakfast.

That night, as Lucy went to rest, she found on her table a very pretty case—a bracelet, the handsomest the colony could furnish — very costly. (Alas! it had been made to Mr. Ernest Beaufort's order, a present for Mrs. Wilkinson, and had been left on the jeweller's hands.) Inside the case was a little piece of paper, with the inscription, "A reconciliation present." It had been chosen by Constance.

Constance had, however, other work on hand. She was haunted, by the impression that Margaret was at the bottom of all this coming and apparent happiness. There was no mistaking that grim sister's calm acquiescence and her confident acceptance of the situation — the cold triumph with which she spoke of the morrow's marriage.

"She has to do with it; she has brought it about with some bad end, I know. She means ruin by it. If it destroys them, it will destroy Gilbert. If I could only find out! But there is no time—oh! there is no time!"

There was very little time indeed. The lamps were dangling in the streets, and lighted; a café or two was filling. Margaret scarcely spoke, but seemed almost to suspect Constance's suspicions of her. Yet she had a bitter and coldly triumphant look—a vein of confidence which doubled suspicon.

That was a troubled night for the gentle Constance. A tremendous responsibility seemed to have been laid on her shoulders; she hardly knew what to do. She had spoken to Margaret with a sort of hint; but that woman, strangely changed—as indeed was every one during these days—met her with an almost fierce warning.

"What do you mean? Beware of interfering with *me!*"

CHAPTER XLI. THE WEDDING-DAY.

The morning had now come round, bright and gay, in strange contrast to the dismal scenes going on in the colony. West was still asleep—even dreaming. It was about six o'clock when he heard a knocking at his door. He started up—the bright crystal-built palaces of dream-land faded out, and dissolved into the night again.

He heard a voice at the door—an agitated voice. "Oh, monsieur, get up. She is ill—poor mademoiselle."

He was up and dressed in a moment—scared—alarmed. To be ill in those days was to be ill to death. "Is it dangerous? What is it? Send for the doctor instantly."

"Oh, sir," said the girl, "he is coming; and I fear it is *it!*"

West was in Margaret's room in a moment. Alas! there could be no mistake: the grim ogre, stalking about, had arbitrarily chosen another victim. The work of his fingers was there—on the face—the ghastly look which soon grew but too familiar.

"Oh, Margaret," he cried, all but wringing his hands at this new sorrow. This was a commentary on what he had thought last night, and of the hint of the abbé—that, beside these real griefs, incident to mortal life, love-lorn sorrows dwindle down of a sudden—seem as a child's grief over the breaking of some toy.

Constance was there, pale and agitated; and here was the rehabiliated Macan, who had hardly got an hour's sleep, just looking in, by hurried express, and snatched from his breakfast. Whenever Dr. Macan, in later and happier times, talked of that awful visitation, there were people of the Filby sort ready to wink and say, after he had left the room, "Did you hear the old hypocrite? Why he blesses the day it came!"

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He had even now, alas! experience enough to have some skill in the malady, and looking at Margaret, he shook his head and whispered to West:

"I'll do what I can. But we can only soothe, and stave off the pain."

Margaret's grim features relaxed.

"I can't hear you," she said. "But I know what you mean. I am not afraid, and have learned never to be afraid of death. I did not think it would be so soon. Gilbert dear, tell me about *that*. Is not this—the day—this the morning?"

It seemed to him that her voice had softened—that her manner had grown gentle. There was a nervous restlessness about her. Gilbert soothed her:

"You must keep quiet, dearest. Don't think of those things: that is all at an end now."

She started, and half raised herself.

"No! no! surely not—not so early as this?"

"No, no," said he, in the same tone. "I mean, to-day will see it all over. Don't think of it any more."

The doctor promising to return in an hour or so, her gaunt eyes eagerly followed him.

"Ah! What o'clock is it now?" she said, hurriedly.

"Past eight."

"Listen, Gilbert—"

"Now, dearest Margaret, I cannot listen—you *must* not talk."

"But you must, Gilbert. I must speak for myself, and I have little time. What you said last night, do you know, struck me deeply. If I had had time, or this had not come on me—but it was affection—all affection for you—indeed it was; and I would have gone through with it—I would, indeed, at all risks, even facing what I am now in presence of, and what is coming. But you deserted me, Gilbert. Yet I suppose you were right."

"Indeed, I know how you loved me all through," said Gilbert, warmly; "I know what you have suffered for me."

"That is nothing," she said, "though if you knew what I *have* done, and meant to do, I dare say that love of yours, Gilbert, would not endure. You will look back yet with repugnance and terror to your sister's memory."

"I tell you, all trouble, all reproach, is over. Dismiss it from your mind. You need not fear. There is yet time," he exclaimed.

"Oh! Gilbert, I must tell you—and it is humiliating for me—but I am not ashamed of it—what I have done. That man Vivian, I discovered, is already a married man!"

"Married!" replied Gilbert, starting.

"Yes. His wife is alive—*is* alive."

"Alive!" repeated West, and turned instantly to the door. "Take care——"

"Do not be afraid," she said. "There is still time——"

"But Lucy and he are to be married—now—soon. Are you serious? Are you sure, Margaret? Take care!"

"That is not all. I told you you would not look back to my memory with affection or regard——" She half raised herself. "I say, do you know why they are to be married to-day? Listen. It was I who sent them the news of the wife's *death!* It did not come from Dr. Favre. She is not dead."

"Oh, Margaret, Margaret! What have you done? Mercy! what shall we do?"

She added, painfully, "Beware of Dr. White. He hates her now, though he *did* love her."

"*He!* Lucy!" repeated West.

"Yes. I listened to him. He found it out. He knows all. He would punish her, and punish *him*, for that detection."

"Oh, Margaret!" the brother could only repeat, "this is shocking! But there is not a moment to be lost. There! It strikes nine o'clock!" He rushed from the room.

Happy day for Lucy! The morning bright as a first Christmas holiday at home. Holiday it was for the colony. A marriage had not taken place there within the memory of exile. No wonder Mr. Penny, the English clergyman, was a little excited, and rehearsed his service carefully, in which he had grown not a little rusty. Madame Jaques was in a flutter. Even the fishwomen knew of it; and some of the younger ones came with a handsome bouquet, to Lucy's infinite delight and confusion. This compliment was, in these days, a simple and genuine one, and not theatrical and mercenary, which it would be now. Lucy herself, charming in her bridal dress, glowing with pride, and fluttering with happiness, scarcely knowing what she did or said, looking the prettiest girl Dieppe had ever seen go up to the altar. No wonder, too, she was happy; for Galignani, in its latest impression, had a scrap of news to the effect of a rumour that the East Indian disturbance had been quelled on the spot. It was a mere vague paragraph, but it meant hope. The dreadful scourge in the town was forgotten for an hour or two. Harco braved the pestilence in a new bright blue coat, with gilt buttons, made on the French model then in fashion. He was overflowing with song, and love, and gallantry.

"Mrs. Jacks, the happiest day of our lives, this is! Ah! but mon cher Jacks knew what he was about when he chose *you*."

Then he broke into his favourite strain:

"The light of her eyes,
That mirrors the skies."

Pretty Madame Jaques was not at all displeased at these compliments. Chabot, too, had done his part. A charming little déjeûner for a few select friends had been prepared.

Happy morning, too, for Vivian! Trouble that had been at his heart for years had passed away. A new era was beginning. He thought he had been shipwrecked for ever; but was now saved — saved for light, and joy, and happiness. Never had Madame Jaques and her female friends thought the handsome colonel—of whom they were such warm admirers—looking so splendid. That sort of soft interest

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that was always in his face—that air of a gentleman which made him courteous and respectful to all about him, contrasted with the bearing of some of their countrymen, had quite attracted them. The night before, he had quite won Madame Jaques for ever, by a present of a little brooch of some value. That lady, without any impeachment of her attachment to her husband, actually wept over this little token.

Bright day! Sun out. Many Frenchmen lounging about the little street, yet with delicacy, and not staring obtrusively. All the English gone up to the church to have a grand, solid stare; those who were not bidden being loud in their envy of those who were, and of disgust and anger at the bride and bridegroom. The destroyer was, for the moment, forgotten. In this pleasant France, they forget a sorrow in a moment.

It is now nearly ten o'clock. They are going off to the English chapel. No one thinks of the plague now. Mr. Penny, a little nervous, is waiting to emerge in his robes. The sun is shining. The bells of the place are ringing. They are waiting for the bridegroom, the handsome Colonel Vivian.

Vivian, a little late, as he feels, is making some few last preparations, putting up something forgotten, so as to have nothing on his mind. He has risen to get his hat, when some one, pale, tottering, and agitated, comes in and says: "Thank God, I have found you here, and am in time!"

"West!" exclaimed Vivian, in surprise, "what does this mean?"

Well might he ask, seeing the pale, worn, and almost fainting object before him, for whom this exertion might have been too much.

"I know not what you will think of me, but it is for the best I do this. It may turn out nothing, after all. But for *her*—for your sake, I ask one question—only one——"

"Certainly," said Vivian, quickly, yet uneasily.

"Have you received any letter from Paris within the last two nights?"

Vivian started, coloured. A presentiment of his old trouble coming back seemed to be gaining on him. "What does this mean? Ah! there is the clock striking, and I am late. By-and-by we will talk of this. They are waiting. Let me go, please."

"Then you *do* know something?" said West. "Ah, take care! Let them wait. Oh, you know not what may depend on this—ruin, misery, that can never be repaired. For her sake, wait a moment"—Vivian was still going—"or I shall have to follow, and speak before them all."

"Speak now, then," said Vivian, excitedly. "What does all this mean?"

"It is this: If you received any paper like *that*"—he showed a sheet of letter-paper with a picture on the top of the page—"and on its news have ventured on this step, I tell you, I solemnly believe that letter was written in this town, and never came from where it affected to come."

Vivian turned pale. "And has your wretched malignity ventured on this? God help us! What is to be done now?"

"Then it is true! I knew it. No, no. As I have a soul, I know nothing of it. O Vivian! That letter is a forgery."

Vivian had sunk down aghast, trembling. He wanted no proofs, no details. He saw it all too plainly. He could only repeat, "What *is* to be done! My God, what is to be done! They are waiting. They are ready! It will kill her!"

At this moment they heard steps on the stairs, and Mr. Blacker entered—express. Dr. White was with him—a malignant look on his face.

"My dear colonel, they are all there—all waiting. The mayor in his place; and the consul has just come in. I ran up to give you a hint. Why, what's the matter? And Mr. West *here!*"

Vivian did not answer him, but looked at him with a dull stare.

"He is not well," said West, hurriedly, "but will be better in a moment. Go back, do you hear, and tell them he will be there in a moment."

"Not well! Good gracious!" said Mr. Blacker, really confounded. "This is all very odd."

"Go back to them at once," said Gilbert, angrily, "or *I* shall."

"Oh, certainly," said Mr. Blacker, alarmed. He did not wish to lose the charge of so important a piece of news, and set off with alacrity.

Dr. White lingered, with a curious smile on his face.

Lucy, in the vestry, on her father's arm, was waiting with a fluttering heart. There was to be a little procession. The rest were in the chapel. The mayor was there in the front seat, now growing a little impatient. Mr. Dempsey, on whom the late Captain Filby's mantle had already fallen, was heard saying, humorously:

"If the tide served this morning, I'd say the colonel had given them all the slip. There's a chaise still to be had in Dieppe. Wouldn't it be fun? It'd be as good as Drury Lane—the whole party waiting here, cooling themselves, and he off. Why, here's old Blacker going off after him! There *is* something up!"

Mr. Blacker came back, with wonder and surprise and importance so plainly mixed up in his face, that Mr. Dempsey said almost aloud:

"I know there's something wrong."

Then he saw Mr. Dacres, with a look of impatience on his face, again come posting out of the vestry, and hurry down out of the chapel. The mayor rose with dignity, and went into the vestry. Mr. Dempsey, scarcely able to restrain his indecent raptures, said, this time aloud:

"He has slipped off, after all!"

* * * *

"What is to be done?" said Vivian, fran-

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tically hesitating on the step of his door. "What! except I take that pistol, and shoot myself. How can I tell them? Oh, the disgrace, the mortification! it will kill her. And my baseness and treachery! Oh, it was infamous. I should not have concealed it. And yet I was not so guilty. I was a boy, only seventeen, and fell into the hands of this wretched French family. I never saw her since; and, for fifteen years, I have been in that slavery. Now, I thought I was free. I could not grieve; I could only rejoice. Tell me what is to be done?"

"Nothing," said West, gloomily, "but go down manfully, and say openly it must be put off for private reasons. Tell her—tell her father, but no one else."

"Tell *her*," repeated Vivian, a little wildly.

"Yes; and here he is now, crossing the street. It is the only straightforward course. Go back to your own room. I will go to them, and tell them you are coming, or some story to account for delay."

As he went out, he saw a chaise clattering down the street. Instantly Mr. Dacres came up.

"What the devil is the meaning of all this? West, are *you* at the bottom of it? I'll hold every man of ye accountable. It's an infernal insult and disrespect. Come up with me, sir, and if you don't both make it as clear as daylight——"

West heard a strange voice beside him. He felt a hand on his arm.

"What! Mr. West here?" said a familiar voice.

Gilbert looked round, and remembered Dr. Parkes-Adams. For a moment he was surprised; then a light of intelligence flashed into his eyes.

"*You* know!" he said. "Come in here, quickly. You have news?"

"News?" said the doctor, "yes! News for Colonel Vivian. Where is he? Here?"

"Heaven be praised! you have come at the right moment."

"Yes! I have travelled all night to bring him the news."

"Come up, quick; he is here."

Vivian, his face between his hands, was looking at Mr. Dacres with a dull stare. To that angry gentleman's "You shall answer to me at twelve paces out on the sands for this, whatever your reasons are," he was beginning to say, slowly, "It is only right you should know," when West rushed in and whispered him hurriedly. At the same moment Vivian's eyes fell on the other figure entering at the doorway.

"Ah!" he cried, starting up.

"Yes," said the latter, meaningly, "I bring you the news." He was a quick, intelligent man.

"He is better," said West, hurriedly, to Dacres. "I was so afraid. It has all passed off, has it not? And I think, Dr. Adams, he is well enough now. We have kept them waiting long enough."

The bewildered Dacres was looking from one to the other. "He could not understand it at all, at all." He did not speak, but followed mechanically as West, Vivian, and the doctor hurried down-stairs.

Poor Lucy, pale and trembling, no longer a blooming rose-bud, but a snowy lily, was ready to sink as the moments of suspense drew on. Hark to the steps and rustle. "Here he is! here he is!" She had faith in him all through, and, what was more, in his bright hopeful face she read no doubt, nor alarm, nor misgiving, but joy and hope.

Even the disappointed gossips could make out no sign of reluctance. Out came the little procession. Mr. Dacres, who had never spoken, was the only one with an air of confusion in his face. Then Mr. Penny addressed himself to his work. The English stood on the benches, to get a good view. The bride looked lovely; the colonel, "noble and beautiful." They were a handsome pair. It was done. They were Colonel Vivian and Mrs. Vivian at last.

So does there come an end for all trials and troubles.

No one in the colony ever solved that curious delay. The strangest part of the whole, and which no one could account for either, was the disappearance of Dr. White. The moment Dr. Parkes-Adams entered so hurriedly upon the scene, he had been noticed to turn pale; and when the quick eye of that gentleman rested on him, the latter broke out with:

"Why, it's the apothecary that decamped from Bristol. He dare not wait for the exposure which I can visit upon him."

Mr. Dacres himself was greatly puzzled by Vivian's sudden and mysterious sickness; but he was too sensible a man to give any trouble, now that things had turned out so well. He was too full of benediction and genial happiness, and presided at the little breakfast, giving toasts à l'Anglaise. It was charming to see The Dear Girl seated there beside her husband—the man of her heart, in the old conventional phrase, and the man of her choice. A bright, bright day.

"Ah! dear," she whispered to Vivian, "poor Gilbert! if he only were here!"

Gilbert had gone home. The events of that morning had been a little beyond his strength; still there was a wonderful change in him. He could not bring himself to look on at the marriage, but went home. He had his own sorrow to hurry back to. This last adventure had excited him marvellously. He was met at the door by Constance.

"Oh, Gilbert," she said, "where have you been? Come in, quick!"

As he entered the room, the dull eyes lighted. The old grim smile came back.

"Too late!" she faltered. "You were too late, Gilbert," she repeated, eagerly; "yet I told you in time."

"No, Margaret, thank God, you have been saved! Your letter, after all, told the truth. She (Vivian's wife) died while you were penning it."

The old nature was not to be so easily worsted. A shade—it might have been the shade of the great enemy—seemed to spread slowly over that thin face. It was the herald of his impatient and deadly grasp. Now he seized his prey; all was over.

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EPILOGUE.

FIVE years after the scene just related. We are at the opposite coast, at a charming house close to Dover, with the sea—the English sea—laving the great white cliffs below. On clear days, the place of banishment could be made out. It was going on as usual. The scourge had been forgotten, but the Vivian scandal had not, though much faded and attenuated. "To have married a second wife the day after the death of his first!" was the essence of it; though the circumstances which forced that haste upon him were often pleaded. The colony had grown gayer even. House rents had risen. More fashionables were coming every year. Le Bœuf had added a wing to the Royal. The Blacker stick still took its usual exercise in the way of flourishing. The old round was going on.

In the pretty house near Dover, it was about nine o'clock of a summer's evening. The claret was being drunk, and two gentlemen were sitting there, drinking the claret. It was Saturday night. A letter had just gone over.

"Now, I hope," said the gentleman of the house, warmly, "that is only to be a beginning; at *least*, every Saturday we shall look for you, so long as we are here. You can pack up the odious briefs, and be back by the coach on Tuesday. That is to be a fixed arrangement, is it not? My dear West, now that I know you, and value you, there is no one I should wish to see so much of."

"Business, dreadful business," said the other, smiling, "which I have foolishly gone back to. I am afraid——"

"What, carrying out that poor priest's 'laborare est orare,' as you told me. That is not the sense he meant it in. He would come back from his grave to reprove you. See what I have done, West, given up the dear army, all to please Lucy." The two gentlemen talked a great deal together.

"It is so curious to me," said Vivian, "to think, as I go out of a morning, of that place opposite, and that Fate should have set me down here, in front of it, as it were. What a deal we went through, both of us—all of us."

West could think, could talk, of those days now without trouble.

"A strange story of a mistake and folly," he said, quietly.

"Do you remember the flurry of these last days—that *last* morning? And the pestilence, and all. It seems like a dream now. You talk of folly, my dear West, but I have often speculated what could you have been thinking of me and my strange behaviour? Well, I suffered enough; and if I did commit folly, I atoned for it. I must tell you we are with friends now, West; and, indeed, you have a little to know."

"My dear Vivian," said the other, "not I. I am a lawyer, and can guess, at least, enough that will do for me. Well, what do you think, as a mere matter of curiosity, some designing Frenchman, and their family. You, a boy, a child. The daughter was——"

"I see, you know enough. I was, indeed, a child; she was double my age. I fell ill of fever in a strange, solitary French town. These people got me into their house—a scoundrel of a French captain. It was shocking, terrible! The day before the marriage, she was in one of those terrible fits. Oh, what I went through! Surely I deserve some peace and happiness now."

There was a long pause.

"And Lucy," said West, hesitating.

"Hush!" said Vivian. "Not a word to her. The Dear Girl suspects, and knows it all, I am convinced. But she wishes that I should *think* she knows nothing, so it must be a mystery to the end."

"Dear Girl, indeed," said West.

"Let us come in now. I am sure she has tea ready."

A bright-lit room, yet of a softened effulgence, pretty furniture, mellow colours, makes a charming frame for Lucy and her child's smile and young voice and engaging ways: a little girl—Gilbert's godchild. The smile brightens as she looks up and sees Gilbert enter. He goes over and sits beside her. He looks younger by ten years than he did in the colony days. His brow is clear; his eyes are brighter. He has a gaiety of manner now. He talks to her with confidence and laughter, and a pleasant fancy. As he does so, his godchild toddles over to him. He smiles as he pats her head. Lucy smiles too. The old dream has gone. In its place has come a reality—better than a thousand of such Queen Mab's visits.

Vivian is at the door, gay and happy. He is singing, softly—what song do we suppose?—

The light of her eye,
That mirrors the sky.

Lucy gives a delighted laugh, and claps her hands.

"Vivian, dear, you know Harco is coming down on Monday."

She is still what she was, and ever will be, THE DEAR GIRL.

THE END OF THE DEAR GIRL.

Next week will appear the second Portion of

GEORGE SILVERMAN'S EXPLANATION.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

The third and concluding Portion will be published in No. 462, for Saturday, 29th Instant.

The third Portion of

HOLIDAY ROMANCE,

BY CHARLES DICKENS,

Will be published in No. 463, on Saturday, 7th March. The Romance will be concluded in the monthly part for April.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—Shakespeare.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XI.—(continued).

After the library had been swept and cleaned in the morning, neither first nor second housemaid had any business in that room at any later period of the day. I stopped Rosanna Spearman, and charged her with a breach of domestic discipline on the spot.

"What might you want in the library at this time of day?" I inquired.

"Mr. Franklin Blake dropped one of his rings up-stairs," says Rosanna; "and I have been into the library to give it to him." The girl's face was all in a flush as she made me that answer; and she walked away with a toss of her head and a look of self-importance which I was quite at a loss to account for. The proceedings in the house had doubtless upset all the women-servants more or less; but none of them had gone clean out of their natural characters, as Rosanna, to all appearance, had now gone out of hers.

I found Mr. Franklin writing at the library-table. He asked for a conveyance to the railway station the moment I entered the room. The first sound of his voice informed me that we now had the resolute side of him uppermost once more. The man made of cotton had disappeared; and the man made of iron sat before me again.

"Going to London, sir?" I asked.

"Going to telegraph to London," says Mr. Franklin. "I have convinced my aunt that we must have a cleverer head than Superintendent Seegrave's to help us; and I have got her permission to despatch a telegram to my father. He knows the Chief Commissioner of Police, and the Commissioner can lay his hand on the right man to solve the mystery of the Diamond. Talking of mysteries, by-the-by," says Mr. Franklin, dropping his voice, "I have another word to say to you before you go to the stables. Don't breathe a word of it to anybody as yet; but either Rosanna Spearman's head is not quite right, or I am afraid she knows more about the Moonstone than she ought to know."

I can hardly tell whether I was more startled or distressed at hearing him say that. If I had been younger, I might have confessed as much to Mr. Franklin. But, when you are old, you acquire one excellent habit. In cases where you don't see your way clearly, you hold your tongue.

"She came in here with a ring I dropped in my bedroom," Mr. Franklin went on. "When I had thanked her, of course I expected her to go. Instead of that, she stood opposite to me at the table, looking at me in the oddest manner—half frightened, and half familiar—I couldn't make it out. 'This is a strange thing about the Diamond, sir,' she said, in a curiously sudden, headlong way. I said, Yes it was, and wondered what was coming next. Upon my honour, Betteredge, I think she must be wrong in the head! She said, 'They will never find the Diamond, sir, will they? No! nor the person who took it—I'll answer for that.' She actually nodded and smiled at me! Before I could ask her what she meant, we heard your step outside. I suppose she was afraid of your catching her here. At any rate, she changed colour, and left the room. What on earth does it mean?"

I could not bring myself to tell him the girl's story, even then. It would have been almost as good as telling him that she was the thief. Besides, even if I had made a clean breast of it, and even supposing she was the thief, the reason why she should let out her secret to Mr. Franklin, of all the people in the world, would have been still as far to seek as ever.

"I can't bear the idea of getting the poor girl into a scrape, merely because she has a flighty way with her, and talks very strangely," Mr. Franklin went on. "And yet, if she had said to the Superintendent what she said to me, fool as he is, I'm afraid——" He stopped there, and left the rest unspoken.

"The best way, sir," I said, "will be for me to say two words privately to my mistress about it at the first opportunity. My lady has a very friendly interest in Rosanna; and the girl may only have been forward and foolish, after all. When there's a mess of any kind in a house, sir, the women-servants like to look at the gloomy side—it gives the poor wretches a kind of importance in their own eyes. If there's anybody ill, trust the women for prophesying that the person will die. If it's a jewel

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lost, trust them for prophesying that it will never be found again."

This view (which, I am bound to say, I thought a probable view myself, on reflection) seemed to relieve Mr. Franklin mightily: he folded up his telegram, and dismissed the subject. On my way to the stables, to order the pony-chaise, I looked in at the servants' hall, where they were at dinner. Rosanna Spearman was not among them. On inquiry, I found that she had been suddenly taken ill, and had gone up-stairs to her own room to lie down,

"Curious! She looked well enough when I saw her last," I remarked.

Penelope followed me out. "Don't talk in that way before the rest of them, father," she said. "You only make them harder on Rosanna than ever. The poor thing is breaking her heart about Mr. Franklin Blake."

Here was another view of the girl's conduct. If it was possible for Penelope to be right, the explanation of Rosanna's strange language and behaviour might have been all in this—that she didn't care what she said, so long as she could surprise Mr. Franklin into speaking to her. Granting that to be the right reading of the riddle, it accounted, perhaps, for her flighty self-conceited manner when she passed me in the hall. Though he had only said three words, still she had carried her point, and Mr. Franklin *had* spoken to her.

I saw the pony harnessed myself. In the infernal network of mysteries and uncertainties that now surrounded us, I declare it was a relief to observe how well the buckles and straps understood each other! When you had seen the pony backed into the shafts of the chaise, you had seen something there was no doubt about. And that, let me tell you, was becoming a treat of the rarest kind in our household.

Going round with the chaise to the front door, I found not only Mr. Franklin, but Mr. Godfrey and Superintendent Seegrave also waiting for me on the steps.

Mr. Superintendent's reflections (after failing to find the Diamond in the servants' rooms or boxes) had led him, it appeared, to an entirely new conclusion. Still sticking to his first text, namely, that somebody in the house had stolen the jewel, our experienced officer was now of opinion that the thief (he was wise enough not to name poor Penelope, whatever he might privately think of her!) had been acting in concert with the Indians; and he accordingly proposed shifting his inquiries to the jugglers in the prison at Frizinghall. Hearing of this new move, Mr. Franklin had volunteered to take the Superintendent back to the town, from which he could telegraph to London as easily as from our station. Mr. Godfrey, still devoutly believing in Mr. Seegrave, and greatly interested in witnessing the examination of the Indians, had begged leave to accompany the officer to Frizinghall. One of the two inferior policemen was to be left at the house, in case anything happened. The other was to go back with the Superintendent to the town. So the four places in the pony-chaise were just filled.

Before he took the reins to drive off, Mr. Franklin walked me away a few steps out of hearing of the others.

"I will wait to telegraph to London," he said, "till I see what comes of our examination of the Indians. My own conviction is, that this muddle-headed local police-officer is as much in the dark as ever, and is simply trying to gain time. The idea of any of the servants being in league with the Indians is a preposterous absurdity, in my opinion. Keep about the house, Betteredge, till I come back, and try what you can make of Rosanna Spearman. I don't ask you to do anything degrading to your own self-respect, or anything cruel towards the girl. I only ask you to exercise your observation more carefully than usual. We will make as light of it as we can before my aunt—but this is a more important matter than you may suppose."

"It's a matter of twenty thousand pounds, sir," I said, thinking of the value of the Diamond.

"It's a matter of quieting Rachel's mind," answered Mr. Franklin gravely. "I am very uneasy about her."

He left me suddenly, as if he desired to cut short any further talk between us. I thought I understood why. Further talk might have let me into the secret of what Miss Rachel had said to him on the terrace.

So they drove away to Frizinghall. I was ready enough, in the girl's own interest, to have a little talk with Rosanna in private. But the needful opportunity failed to present itself. She only came downstairs again at tea-time. When she did appear, she was flighty and excited, had what they call an hysterical attack, took a dose of sal volatile by my lady's order, and was sent back to her bed.

The day wore on to its end drearily and miserably enough, I can tell you. Miss Rachel still kept her room, declaring that she was too ill to come down to dinner that day. My lady was in such low spirits about her daughter, that I could not bring myself to make her additionally anxious, by reporting what Rosanna Spearman had said to Mr. Franklin. Penelope persisted in believing that she was to be forthwith tried, sentenced, and transported for theft. The other women took to their Bibles and hymn-books, and looked as sour as verjuice over their reading—a result, which I have observed, in my sphere of life, to follow generally on the performance of acts of piety at unaccustomed periods of the day. As for me, I hadn't even heart enough to open my Robinson Crusoe. I went out into the yard, and, being hard up for a little cheerful society, set my chair by the kennels, and talked to the dogs.

Half an hour before dinner-time, the two gentlemen came back from Frizinghall, having arranged with Superintendent Seegrave that he was to return to us the next day. They had called on Mr. Murthwaite, the Indian traveller,

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at his present residence, near the town. At Mr. Franklin's request, he had kindly given them the benefit of his knowledge of the language, in dealing with those two, out of the three Indians, who knew nothing of English. The examination, conducted carefully, and at great length, had ended in nothing; not the shadow of a reason being discovered for suspecting the jugglers of having tampered with any of our servants. On reaching that conclusion, Mr. Franklin had sent his telegraphic message to London, and there the matter now rested till to-morrow came.

So much for the history of the day that followed the birthday. Not a glimmer of light had broken in on us, so far. A day or two after, however, the darkness lifted a little. How, and with what result, you shall presently see.

CHAPTER XII.

The Thursday night passed, and nothing happened. With the Friday morning came two pieces of news.

Item the first: The baker's man declared he had met Rosanna Spearman, on the previous afternoon, with a thick veil on, walking towards Frizinghall by the footpath way over the moor. It seemed strange that anybody should be mistaken about Rosanna, whose shoulder marked her out pretty plainly, poor thing—but mistaken the man must have been; for Rosanna, as you know, had been all the Thursday afternoon ill up-stairs in her room.

Item the second came through the postman. Worthy Mr. Candy had said one more of his many unlucky things, when he drove off in the rain on the birthday night, and told me that a doctor's skin was waterproof. In spite of his skin, the wet had got through him. He had caught a chill that night, and was now down with a fever. The last accounts, brought by the postman, represented him to be light-headed—talking nonsense as glibly, poor man, in his delirium as he often talked it in his sober senses. We were all sorry for the little doctor; but Mr. Franklin appeared to regret his illness, chiefly on Miss Rachel's account. From what he said to my lady, while I was in the room at breakfast-time, he appeared to think that Miss Rachel—if the suspense about the Moonstone was not soon set at rest—might stand in urgent need of the best medical advice at our disposal.

Breakfast had not been over long, when a telegram from Mr. Blake, the elder, arrived, in answer to his son. It informed us that he had laid hands (through his friend, the Commissioner) on the right man to help us. The name of him was Serjeant Cuff; and the arrival of him from London, might be expected by the morning train.

At reading the name of the new police-officer, Mr. Franklin gave a start. It seems that he had heard some curious anecdotes about Serjeant Cuff, from his father's lawyer, during his stay in London. "I begin to hope we are seeing the end of our anxieties already," he said. "If half the stories I have heard are true, when it comes to unravelling a mystery, there isn't the equal in England of Sergeant Cuff!"

We all got excited and impatient as the time drew near for the appearance of this renowned and capable character. Superintendent Seegrave returning to us at his appointed time, and hearing that the Sergeant was expected, instantly shut himself up in a room, with pen, ink, and paper, to make notes of the Report which would be certainly expected from him. I should have liked to have gone to the station myself, to fetch the Sergeant. But my lady's carriage and horses were not to be thought of, even for the celebrated Cuff; and the pony-chaise was required later for Mr. Godfrey. He deeply regretted being obliged to leave his aunt at such an anxious time; and he kindly put off the hour of his departure till as late as the last train, for the purpose of hearing what the clever London police-officer thought of the case. But on Friday night he must be in town, having a Ladies' Charity, in difficulties, waiting to consult him on Saturday morning.

When the time came for the Sergeant's arrival, I went down to the gate to look out for him.

A fly from the railway drove up as I reached the lodge; and out got a grizzled, elderly man, so miserably lean that he looked as if he had not got an ounce of flesh on his bones in any part of him. He was dressed all in decent black, with a white cravat round his neck. His face was as sharp as a hatchet, and the skin of it was as yellow and dry and withered as an autumn leaf. His eyes, of a steely light grey, had a very disconcerting trick, when they encountered your eyes, of looking as if they expected something more from you than you were aware of yourself. His walk was soft; his voice was melancholy; his long lanky fingers were hooked like claws. He might have been a parson, or an undertaker—or anything else you like, except what he really was. A more complete opposite to Superintendent Seegrave than Sergeant Cuff, and a less comforting officer to look at, for a family in distress, I defy you to discover, search where you may.

"Is this Lady Verinder's?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"I am Sergeant Cuff."

"This way, sir, if you please."

On our road to the house, I mentioned my name and position in the family, to satisfy him that he might speak to me about the business on which my lady was to employ him. Not a word did he say about the business, however, for all that. He admired the grounds, and remarked that he felt the sea air very brisk and refreshing. I privately wondered, on my side, how the celebrated Cuff had got his reputation. We reached the house, in the temper of two strange dogs, coupled up together for the first time in their lives by the same chain.

Asking for my lady, and hearing that she was in one of the conservatories, we went round to the gardens at the back, and sent a servant to seek her. While we were waiting, Sergeant

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Cuff looked through the evergreen arch on our left, spied out our rosery, and walked straight in, with the first appearance of anything like interest that he had shown yet. To the gardener's astonishment, and to my disgust, this celebrated policeman proved to be quite a mine of learning on the trumpery subject of rose-gardens.

"Ah, you've got the right exposure here to the south and sou'-west," says the Sergeant, with a wag of his grizzled head, and a streak of pleasure in his melancholy voice. "This is the shape for a rosery—nothing like a circle set in a square. Yes, yes; with walks between all the beds. But they oughtn't to be gravel walks like these. Grass, Mr. Gardener—grass walks between your roses; gravel's too hard for them. That's a sweet pretty bed of white roses and blush roses. They always mix well together, don't they? Here's the white musk rose, Mr. Betteredge—our old English rose holding up its head along with the best and the newest of them. Pretty dear!" says the Sergeant, fondling the Musk Rose with his lanky fingers, and speaking to it as if he was speaking to a child.

This was a nice sort of man to recover Miss Rachel's Diamond, and to find out the thief who stole it!

"You seem to be fond of roses, Sergeant?" I remarked.

"I haven't much time to be fond of anything," says Sergeant Cuff. "But, when I *have* a moment's fondness to bestow, most times, Mr. Betteredge, the roses get it. I began my life among them in my father's nursery garden, and I shall end my life among them, if I can. Yes. One of these days (please God) I shall retire from catching thieves, and try my hand at growing roses. There will be grass walks, Mr. Gardener, between my beds," says the Sergeant, on whose mind the gravel paths of our rosery seemed to dwell unpleasantly.

"It seems an odd taste, sir," I ventured to say, "for a man in your line of life."

"If you will look about you (which most people won't do)," says Sergeant Cuff, "you will see that the nature of a man's tastes is, most times, as opposite as possible to the nature of a man's business. Show me any two things more opposite one from the other than a rose and a thief; and I'll correct my tastes accordingly—if it isn't too late at my time of life. You find the damask rose a goodish stock for most of the tender sorts, don't you, Mr. Gardener? Ah! I thought so. Here's a lady coming. Is it Lady Verinder?"

He had seen her before either I or the gardener had seen her—though we knew which way to look, and he didn't. I began to think him rather a quicker man than he appeared to be at first sight.

The Sergeant's appearance, or the Sergeant's errand—one or both—seemed to cause my lady some little embarrassment. She was, for the first time in all my experience of her, at a loss what to say at an interview with a stranger. Sergeant Cuff put her at her ease directly. He asked if any other person had been employed about the robbery before we sent for him; and hearing that another person had been called in, and was now in the house, begged leave to speak to him before anything else was done.

My lady led the way back. Before he followed her, the Sergeant relieved his mind on the subject of the gravel walks by a parting word to the gardener. "Get her ladyship to try grass," he said, with a sour look at the paths. "No gravel! no gravel!"

Why Superintendent Seegrave should have appeared to be several sizes smaller than life, on being presented to Sergeant Cuff, I can't undertake to explain. I can only state the fact. They retired together; and remained a weary long time shut up from all mortal intrusion. When they came out, Mr. Superintendent was excited, and Mr. Sergeant was yawning.

"The Sergeant wishes to see Miss Verinder's sitting-room," says Mr. Seegrave, addressing me with great pomp and eagerness. "The Sergeant may have some questions to ask. Attend the Sergeant, if you please!"

While I was being ordered about in this way, I looked at the great Cuff. The great Cuff, on his side, looked at Superintendent Seegrave in that quietly expecting way which I have already noticed. I can't affirm that he was on the watch for his brother-officer's speedy appearance in the character of an Ass—I can only say that I strongly suspected it.

I led the way up-stairs. The Sergeant went softly all over the Indian cabinet and all round the "boudoir;" asking questions (occasionally only of Mr. Superintendent, and continually of me), the drift of which I believe to have been equally unintelligible to both of us. In due time, his course brought him to the door, and put him face to face with the decorative painting that you know of. He laid one lean inquiring finger on the small smear, just under the lock, which Superintendent Seegrave had already noticed, when he reproved the women-servants for all crowding together into the room.

"That's a pity," says Sergeant Cuff. "How did it happen?"

He put the question to me. I answered that the women-servants had crowded into the room on the previous morning, and that some of their petticoats had done the mischief. "Superintendent Seegrave ordered them out, sir," I added, "before they did any more harm."

"Right!" says Mr. Superintendent in his military way. "I ordered them out. The petticoats did it, Sergeant—the petticoats did it."

"Did you notice which petticoat did it?" asked Sergeant Cuff, still addressing himself, not to his brother-officer, but to me.

"No, sir."

He turned to Superintendent Seegrave upon that, and said, "*You* noticed, I suppose?"

Mr. Superintendent looked a little taken aback; but he made the best of it. "I can't

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charge my memory, Sergeant," he said, "a mere trifle—a mere trifle."

Sergeant Cuff looked at Mr. Seegrave as he had looked at the gravel walks in the rosery, and gave us, in his melancholy way, the first taste of his quality which we had had yet.

"I made a private inquiry last week, Mr. Superintendent," he said. "At one end of the inquiry there was a murder, and at the other end there was a spot of ink on a tablecloth that nobody could account for. In all my experience along the dirtiest ways of this dirty little world, I have never met with such a thing as a trifle yet. Before we go a step further in this business we must see the petticoat that made the smear, and we must know for certain when that paint was wet."

Mr. Superintendent—taking his set-down rather sulkily—asked if he should summon the women. Sergeant Cuff, after considering a minute, sighed, and shook his head.

"No," he said, "we'll take the matter of the paint first. It's a question of Yes or No with the paint—which is short. It's a question of petticoats with the woman—which is long. What o'clock was it when the servants were in this room yesterday morning? Eleven o'clock—eh? Is there anybody in the house who knows whether that paint was wet or dry, at eleven yesterday morning?"

"Her ladyship's nephew, Mr. Franklin Blake, knows," I said.

"Is the gentleman in the house?"

Mr. Franklin was as close at hand as could be—waiting for his first chance of being introduced to the great Cuff. In half a minute he was in the room, and was giving his evidence as follows:

"That door, Sergeant," he said, "has been painted by Miss Verinder, under my inspection, with my help, and in a vehicle of my own composition. The vehicle dries whatever colours may be used with it, in twelve hours."

"Do you remember when the smeared bit was done, sir?" asked the Sergeant.

"Perfectly," answered Mr. Franklin. "That was the last morsel of the door to be finished. We wanted to get it done, on Wednesday last—and I myself completed it by three in the afternoon, or soon after."

"To-day is Friday," said Sergeant Cuff, addressing himself to Superintendent Seegrave. "Let us reckon back, sir. At three on the Wednesday afternoon, that bit of the painting was completed. The vehicle dried it in twelve hours—that is to say, dried it by three o'clock on Thursday morning. At eleven on Thursday morning you held your inquiry here. Take three from eleven, and eight remains. That paint had been *eight hours dry*, Mr. Superintendent, when you supposed that the women-servants' petticoats smeared it."

First knock-down blow for Mr. Seegrave! If he had not suspected poor Penelope, I should have pitied him.

Having settled the question of the paint, Sergeant Cuff, from that moment, gave his brother-officer up as a bad job—and addressed himself to Mr. Franklin, as the more promising assistant of the two.

"It's quite on the cards, sir," he said, "that you have put the clue into our hands."

As the words passed his lips, the bedroom door opened, and Miss Rachel came out among us suddenly.

She addressed herself to the Sergeant, without appearing to notice (or to heed) that he was a perfect stranger to her.

"Did you say," she asked, pointing to Mr. Franklin, "that *he* had put the clue into your hands?"

("This is Miss Verinder," I whispered, behind the Sergeant.)

"That gentleman, miss," says the Sergeant—with his steely-grey eyes carefully studying my young lady's face—"has possibly put the clue into our hands."

She turned for one moment, and tried to look at Mr. Franklin. I say, tried, for she suddenly looked away again before their eyes met. There seemed to be some strange disturbance in her mind. She coloured up, and then she turned pale again. With the paleness, there came a new look into her face, a look which it startled me to see.

"Having answered your question, miss," says the Sergeant, "I beg leave to make an inquiry in my turn. There is a smear on the painting of your door, here. Do you happen to know when it was done? or who did it?"

Instead of making any reply, Miss Rachel went on with her questions, as if he had not spoken, or as if she had not heard him.

"Are you another police-officer?" she asked.

"I am Sergeant Cuff, miss, of the Detective Police."

"Do you think a young lady's advice worth having?"

"I shall be glad to hear it, miss."

"Do your duty by yourself—and don't allow Mr. Franklin Blake to help you!"

She said those words so spitefully, so savagely, with such an extraordinary outbreak of ill-will towards Mr. Franklin, in her voice and her look, that—though I had known her from a baby, though I loved and honoured her next to my lady herself—I was ashamed of Miss Rachel for the first time in my life.

Sergeant Cuff's immovable eyes never stirred from off her face. "Thank you, miss," he said. "Do you happen to know anything about the smear? Might you have done it by accident yourself?"

"I know nothing about the smear."

With that answer, she turned away, and shut herself up again in her bedroom. This time, I heard her—as Penelope had heard her before—burst out crying as soon as she was alone again.

I couldn't bring myself to look at the Sergeant—I looked at Mr. Franklin, who stood nearest to me. He seemed to be even more sorely distressed at what had passed than I was.

"I told you I was uneasy about her," he said. "And now you see why."

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"Miss Verinder appears to be a little out of temper about the loss of her Diamond," remarked the Sergeant. "It's a valuable jewel. Natural enough! natural enough!"

Here was the excuse that I had made for her (when she forgot herself before Superintendent Seegrave, on the previous day) being made for her over again, by a man who couldn't have had *my* interest in making it—for he was a perfect stranger! A kind of cold shudder ran through me, which I couldn't account for at the time. I know, now, that I must have got my first suspicion, at that moment, of a new light (and a horrid light) having suddenly fallen on the case, in the mind of Sergeant Cuff—purely and entirely in consequence of what he had seen in Miss Rachel, and heard from Miss Rachel, at that first interview between them.

"A young lady's tongue is a privileged member, sir," says the Sergeant to Mr. Franklin. "Let us forget what has passed, and go straight on with this business. Thanks to you, we know when the paint was dry. The next thing to discover is when the paint was last seen without that smear. *You* have got a head on your shoulders—and you understand what I mean."

Mr. Franklin composed himself, and came back with an effort from Miss Rachel to the matter in hand.

"I think I do understand," he said. "The more we narrow the question of time, the more we also narrow the field of inquiry."

"That's it, sir," said the Sergeant. "Did you notice your work here, on the Wednesday afternoon, after you had done it?"

Mr. Franklin shook his head, and answered, "I can't say I did."

"Did *you*?" inquired Sergeant Cuff, turning to me.

"I can't say I did either, sir."

"Who was the last person in the room, the last thing on Wednesday night?"

"Miss Rachel, I suppose, sir."

Mr. Franklin struck in there, "Or possibly your daughter, Betteredge." He turned to Sergeant Cuff, and explained that my daughter was Miss Verinder's maid.

"Mr. Betteredge, ask your daughter to step up. Stop!" says the Sergeant, taking me away to the window, out of earshot. "Your Superintendent here," he went on, in a whisper, "has made a pretty full report to me of the manner in which he has managed this case. Among other things, he has, by his own confession, set the servants' backs up. It's very important to smooth them down again. Tell your daughter, and tell the rest of them, these two things, with my compliments: First, that I have no evidence before me, yet, that the Diamond has been stolen; I only know that the Diamond has been lost. Second, that *my* business here with the servants is simply to ask them to lay their heads together and help me to find it."

My experience of the women-servants, when Superintendent Seegrave laid his embargo on their rooms, came in handy here.

"May I make so bold, Sergeant, as to tell the women a third thing?" I asked. "Are they free (with your compliments) to fidget up and downstairs, and whisk in and out of their bedrooms, if the fit takes them?"

"Perfectly free," says the Sergeant.

"*That* will smooth them down, sir," I remarked, "from the cook to the scullion."

"Go, and do it at once, Mr. Betteredge."

I did it in less than five minutes. There was only one difficulty when I came to the bit about the bedrooms. It took a pretty stiff exertion of my authority, as chief, to prevent the whole of the female household from following me and Penelope upstairs, in the character of volunteer witnesses in a burning fever of anxiety to help Sergeant Cuff.

The Sergeant seemed to approve of Penelope. He became a trifle less dreary; and he looked much as he had looked when he noticed the white musk rose in the flower-garden. Here is my daughter's evidence, as drawn off from her by the Sergeant. She gave it, I think, very prettily—but, there! she is my child all over: nothing of her mother in her; Lord bless you, nothing of her mother in her!

Penelope examined: Took a lively interest in the painting on the door, having helped to mix the colours. Noticed the bit of work under the lock, because it was the last bit done. Had seen it, some hours afterwards, without a smear. Had left it, as late as twelve at night, without a smear. Had, at that hour, wished her young lady good night in the bedroom; had heard the clock strike in the "boudoir;" had her hand at the time on the handle of the painted door; knew the paint was wet (having helped to mix the colours, as aforesaid); took particular pains not to touch it; could swear that she held up the skirts of her dress, and that there was no smear on the paint then; could *not* swear that her dress mightn't have touched it accidentally in going out; remembered the dress she had on, because it was new, a present from Miss Rachel; her father remembered, and could speak to it, too; could, and would, and did fetch it; dress recognised by her father as the dress she wore that night; skirts examined, a long job from the size of them; not the ghost of a paint-stain discovered anywhere. End of Penelope's evidence—and very pretty and convincing, too. Signed, Gabriel Betteredge.

The Sergeant's next proceeding was to question me about any large dogs in the house who might have got into the room, and done the mischief with a whisk of their tails. Hearing that this was impossible, he next sent for a magnifying-glass, and tried how the smear looked, seen that way. No skin-mark (as of a human hand) printed off on the paint. All the signs visible—signs which told that the paint had been smeared by some loose article of somebody's dress touching it in going by. That somebody (putting together Penelope's evidence and Mr. Franklin's evidence) must have been in the room, and done the mischief, between midnight and three o'clock on the Thursday morning.

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Having brought his investigation to this point, Sergeant Cuff discovered that such a person as Superintendent Seegrave was still left in the room, upon which he summed up the proceedings for his brother-officer's benefit, as follows:

"This trifle of yours, Mr. Superintendent," says the Sergeant, pointing to the place on the door, "has grown a little in importance since you noticed it last. At the present stage of the inquiry there are, as I take it, three discoveries to make, starting from that smear. Find out (first) whether there is any article of dress in this house with the smear of the paint on it. Find out (second) who that dress belongs to. Find out (third) how the person can account for having been in this room, and smeared the paint, between midnight and three in the morning. If the person can't satisfy you, you haven't far to look for the hand that has got the Diamond. I'll work this by myself, if you please, and detain you no longer from your regular business in the town. You have got one of your men here, I see. Leave him here at my disposal, in case I want him—and allow me to wish you good morning."

Superintendent Seegrave's respect for the Sergeant was great; but his respect for himself was greater still. Hit hard by the celebrated Cuff, he hit back smartly, to the best of his ability, on leaving the room.

"I have abstained from expressing any opinion, so far," says Mr. Superintendent, with his military voice still in good working order. "I have now only one remark to offer, on leaving this case in your hands. There *is* such a thing, Sergeant, as making a mountain out of a molehill. Good morning."

"There is also such a thing as making nothing out of a molehill, in consequence of your head being too high to see it." Having returned his brother-officer's compliment in those terms, Sergeant Cuff wheeled about, and walked away to the window by himself.

Mr. Franklin and I waited to see what was coming next. The Sergeant stood at the window, with his hands in his pockets, looking out, and whistling the tune of "The Last Rose of Summer" softly to himself. Later in the proceedings, I discovered that he only forgot his manners so far as to whistle, when his mind was hard at work, seeing its way inch by inch to its own private ends, on which occasions "The Last Rose of Summer" evidently helped and encouraged him. I suppose it fitted in somehow with his character. It reminded him, you see, of his favourite roses, and, as *he* whistled it, it was the most melancholy tune going.

Turning from the window, after a minute or two, the Sergeant walked into the middle of the room, and stopped there, deep in thought, with his eyes on Miss Rachel's bedroom-door. After a little he roused himself, nodded his head, as much as to say, "That will do!" and, addressing me, asked for ten minutes' conversation with my mistress, at her ladyship's earliest convenience.

Leaving the room with this message, I heard Mr. Franklin ask the Sergeant a question, and stopped to hear the answer also at the threshold of the door.

"Can you guess yet," inquired Mr. Franklin, "who has stolen the Diamond?"

"*Nobody has stolen the Diamond,*" answered Sergeant Cuff.

We both started at that extraordinary view of the case, and both earnestly begged him to tell us what he meant.

"Wait a little," said the Sergeant. "The pieces of the puzzle are not all put together yet."

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

ECLIPSE.

On the 1st of April, 1764, during an eclipse of the sun, Spiletta, a celebrated mare of illustrious descent, gave birth, in the Duke of Cumberland's stables in the Isle of Dogs, to a little chesnut colt. The eclipse being generally considered by the stud-manager and the anxious grooms as having some mysterious reference to the colt's future career, the Duke at once named the little chesnut stranger "Eclipse"—and as Eclipse he was henceforward known. He was of a light chesnut colour, his off hind leg white from nearly the top of the shank to the foot; and he had a white blaze from his forehead to his nose. His dam, Spiletta, was a bay mare, bred by Sir Robert Eden, and got by Regulus out of Mother Western. Though she only started once, and was then beaten by another child of Regulus, Spiletta was of royal origin and of desert blood. On her father's side she sprang from the Godolphin barb and Lister Turk; on her mother's side, from one of Oliver Cromwell's barb mares. Marske, the sire of Eclipse, was also of the noblest blood. He was descended from Bartlett's Childers, and traced back to Lord Fairfax's Morocco barb. About the time of the Commonwealth, speed became the great desideratum of the breeders, instead of bulk; as armour had dropped off the horse-soldier piece by piece, the old Flemish war-horse had become obsolete; and breeders, with an eye to the demands of the army, directed their attention more to fleetness. Marske only ran about six times, and in those six times was only thrice victorious. He was sold, on the Duke of Cumberland's death, for a very trifling sum, and was afterwards purchased by a Mr. Wildman for only twenty guineas, and to the infinite contentment of the seller. But when Eclipse became illustrious, his father became illustrious too, and was purchased by the Earl of Abingdon for a thousand guineas. The produce of this renowned horse, won in twenty-two years, amounted to seventy-one thousand two hundred and five pounds ten shillings, besides the Salisbury silver bowl, the Epsom cup, twenty-eight hogsheads of claret at Newmarket, the Ipswich gold cup, and the Newmarket whip.

The Duke of Cumberland, the patron of

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Figg and Broughton, the prize-fighters, and also a great friend of horse-racing, died, by no means much regretted, in 1765, and, on his death, Eclipse was sold with the rest of the stud. The unpretending colt, with the white off hind leg and the long white blaze, was knocked down in Smithfield for seventy guineas. Mr. Wildman, the salesman, who kept a good stud of race-horses at Mickleham, near Dorking, and also took in horses to train, had expressed a wish to buy Eclipse; some groom or jockey, with an eye to the colt, so short in the forehand and so high in the hips, had, in fact, given a hint of his promise, and Wildman was anxious to carry him off. The ivory hammer had already fallen before the tardy buyer made his appearance. The purchaser of the chesnut colt eyed him with scornful triumph; not that Eclipse was worth much, but then he had "nicked" that sharp fellow, Wildman, who always thought he was up to everything. But Wildman was Yorkshire too, and hard, very hard to get round. He took out his watch, and pronounced the recent sale illegal. The hour of sale that had been fixed in the advertisement had not yet arrived by several minutes. The lot knocked down must be re-sold, or there would be pickings for the lawyers out of the matter. The auctioneer sulkily confesses the error; the sullen purchaser yields, too, per force. The chesnut yearling is put up again. Eventually Eclipse is knocked down, amid the amusement of his friends, to Mr. Wildman, the acute and the pertinacious, for seventy-five guineas.

The Godolphin Arabian, sent as a present to Louis the Fourteenth by the Emperor of Morocco was so little thought of that it was sold to a man who drove it about Paris in a cart, and from the cart this fallen monarch of the desert was taken by the English gentleman who bought it. In youth, Eclipse was equally despised, and his genius as cruelly ignored. His temper was certainly bad; he bit, and kicked, and jibbed, and shied, and struck out like a boxer with his fore legs. In various other uncomfortable ways he tried to proclaim his irresistible courage, daring, speed, and endurance. At one time, vexed and distracted, Mr. Wildman thought it would be impossible to bring him to the post except as a gelding, his spirit was so fiery and unquenchable. At last, in a rage, Wildman put him into the not very gentle hands of a poaching roughrider near Epsom, who rode him about all day from stable to stable, and at night took him to the cover-side, or made him wait while he smoked pheasants, or dragged stubbles for partridges. Even the steel joints and india-rubber muscles of Eclipse wearied of this ceaseless drudgery, and he grew quieter and more docile; but still the animal's lion heart was so large, and throbbed with such a full hot flood of generous blood, that his spirit remained unbroken, and his favourite jockeys, Fitzpatrick and Oakley, never attempted to hold him, but sat patient and wondering in their saddles, flying through the air till the horse stopped and the earthquake of cheering began.

When Eclipse was four years old, Mr. O'Kelly, a well-known man on the turf, gave two hundred and fifty guineas for a half share in him, and, soon after, seven hundred and fifty for the remainder. He ran the next year at Epsom.

The Dennis O'Kelly who bought Eclipse was an Irish adventurer—some said a sedan-chairman. When he suddenly became a sort of Midas, at whose touch everything turned into gold, envy and cynicism wrote countless satires and lampoons upon him, attributing his wealth to every possible crime and baseness. He seems to have been a rough, shrewd, reckless fellow, thoroughly conscious of the power of his wealth, and careless to conceal his triumph.

With an ignorant head, but skilful at combinations and calculations, O'Kelly, nevertheless, had his reverses; at one period of his life, beggared at the green-cloth, he found his way into the Fleet, and could not get easily out of it again, till his mistress lent him her last hundred pounds, and with that he slowly won back the wandering guineas. Fortune was never tired of favouring the noisy Irishman, who yet failed to obtain the recognition of society, and could not succeed in getting admission into the best clubs, social or sporting. Being refused admittance into the Jockey Club, he could never run Eclipse for any of the great Newmarket stakes—a source of perpetual mortification to the blustering Irishman.

But honest or dishonest, thwarted by the aristocracy or aided by rogues, O'Kelly did his best to aid his steady friend, Fortune, by shrewdness, sagacity, indefatigable industry, and perseverance. No tricks could baffle him, no scheme blind his keen eyes. He had both the rush and the staying power of a good horse; he knew when to "wait" on his adversaries, or when to spring on them and pass them at the last length. In fact, on the turf he was as invincible as Eclipse, his bread-winner; horse and man, nothing could come near them. To prevent his jockey's ever being bought over, he always kept a favourite rider, at an annual salary. This man was legally pledged to ride for him, whenever ordered to do so, for any plate, match, or sweepstake, but with the privilege at odd times of riding for any other person, if O'Kelly had no horse entered for the same race. When he first made this contract, and fixed on his jockey, he instantly acceded to the rider's terms, and at once offered to double them if the jockey would also bind himself under a penalty never to ride for any of the *black-legs*.

The little man in boots, with perhaps no very exalted idea of Captain O'Kelly's honour, asked, with an incontrollable stare, whom he called black-legs? The captain replied, with a string of sonorous Anglo-Irish oaths:

"Oh, by the powers, my dear, I'll soon make you understand whom I mean by the dirty black-legs." With that preliminary assurance, the Captain named all the chief members of the Jockey Club of the day.

Such was the revenge of the man on those who had shut their doors upon the owner of Eclipse. O'Kelly usually carried a heap of

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bank notes carelessly crumpled up in his waistcoat pockets. On one occasion, while he was standing at a hazard table at the Windsor races, a stealthy hand was seen by a spectator in the act of drawing out some notes from the Irishman's pocket. There was an instant alarm in the room, and the delinquent was grappled by a dozen rough hands. Some persons were for pumping on the kleptomaniac, others for hauling him at once before a magistrate; but O'Kelly had his own way of dealing with such offenders. He at once coolly seized the rascal by the collar and kicked him downstairs, saying:

"'Tis sufficient punishment for the blackguard to be deprived the pleasure of keeping company with gentlemen."

The saddling bell that rang on the Epsom Downs on the 3rd of May, 1769 (the ninth year of the reign of George the Third), was a knell sounding for the fortunes of all those unlucky men who had betted against O'Kelly's new five-year old. The bell, swaying in the little belfry near the winning-post, was announcing, that May morning, only a small race; it was for a poor fifty pound for horses that had never won, thirty-pound matches excepted. John Oakley appears with the light chesnut about which O'Kelly is so confident, and the booted squires do not see very much in him. His fore quarters sink in his stride, there's something very odd about his withers; is very low in his fore quarters; altogether a doubtful beast. "Captain" O'Kelly thinks otherwise. Yesterday he took the odds to a large amount—cocked hats full of guineas; to-day he is more violent and positive, bets even money, and five and six to four that he would beat all the horses. Now he is called on to declare, for the jockeys are weighing, and the course is clearing, violently he shouts, in answer:

"Eclipse first, and the rest nowhere."

Mr. Fortesque's Gower, Mr. Castle's Cade, Mr. Jenning's Trial, and Mr. Quick's Plume are the competitors of Eclipse. The light chesnut horse, with the white off hind leg, takes its trial canter, and the turf echoes under its flashing hoofs. The man in scarlet rides forward; the horses get into line; the flag drops; they start. O'Kelly's eager eyes watch the circular green ribbon of turf with confident yet anxious glance. At the three-mile post the horses are all together; the chesnut has not come forward yet; but though John Oakley pulls with all his might for the whole of the last mile, the lion of a horse distances all the four, and springs in almost before the rest have turned the corner.

And now the crowd that closed in round the unruffled winner found all sorts of new beauties in him. A firkin of butter could rest on his withers. His shoulders, they now see, are exactly like those of a greyhound, wide at the upper part and nearly on a line with his back. Old men begin to think that he may some day, if his speed goes on increasing, equal Flying Childers, who went nearly a mile a minute, who ran four miles, one furlong, and one hundred and thirty-eight yards on the Beacon course in seven minutes and thirty seconds, and who was supposed to cover a space of twenty-five feet at every bound. The delighted jockey tells the exulting noisy owner that from the first lift of the whip Eclipse made running, and broke clean away from the ruck.

That same month Eclipse won a two-mile race at Ascot, and in June the King's Plate at Winchester. The same season he bore away the King's Plate at Salisbury, and the City Silver Bowl; he also walked over for the King's Plate at Canterbury, and won the King's Plates at Lewes and Lichfield. There was no compromise about his victories; he cut down the field at once, and shot in like a rifle bullet.

In 1770, at Newmarket, Eclipse was again conqueror, beating Bucephalus and Pensioner, and winning pint cups full of guineas for his old master, Mr. Wildman. When running for the King's Plate, the betting was ten to one on Eclipse. After the heat, large bets were made at six and seven to four that he would distance Pensioner, which he did with ease. At Guilford, in June of the same year, he carried off the King's Plate and the subscription purse of three hundred and nineteen pounds ten shillings. At starting, the betting was twenty to one on him; and when running a hundred to one. He sprang away at once, kept the lead, at two miles was a distance ahead, and ran in without requiring whip or spur. He had already won for lucky O'Kelly a cart-full of gold cups, silver plates, and purses of guineas. Sporting men were getting afraid of him. In September, 1770, at Lincoln, he walked over for the King's Plate. In October, O'Kelly entered his champion for the Newmarket one hundred and fifty guinea race, which he won. All the best six-year olds were then entered against him for the King's Plate. O'Kelly offered to take ten to one. Bets were made to an enormous amount. The captain, being called upon to declare, shouted his old cry, "Eclipse and nothing else." Down went the flag, off went the enchanted horse at score, double distanced the whole following in a moment, and passed the winning-post without turning a hair.

No horse dare run against Eclipse again after that. He walked over the course for several King's Plates, and was then put out of training and reserved for breeding. Captain O'Kelly's fee at Clay Hill, near Epsom, was fifty guineas. Eclipse was afterwards removed to O'Kelly's seat at Cannons, Middlesex. Eclipse's master used to declare that he had gained more than twenty-five thousand pounds by him; but whether he meant by breeding alone we do not know.

This paragon of race-horses died at Cannons on the 25th of February, 1789, in the twenty-sixth year of his age, of colic and inflammation. The stomach and liver were found much diseased. The heart of the indomitable creature weighed fourteen pounds, and Vial de St. Bel, who opened him, attributed his extra-

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ordinary and unflinching courage to the size and vigour of this huge blood-pump. It is a singular fact, that a small dark spot on the quarter of Eclipse has been found in his descendants in the fifth and sixth generations.

At the interment of this king of horses, cake and ale were given, as at a royal funeral. The same respect had been shown to the memory of the great Godolphin Arabian. That excellent authority, the author of "Scott and Sebright," kindly calls our attention to the parallel fact of the funeral of the illustrious descendant of the Godolphin barb, Dr. Syntax, the sire of Beeswing. On that mournful occasion, a party of Newmarket trainers were invited to see him shot and buried in the paddocks behind the palace at Newmarket. They gave a lusty "three times three" over the grave, and then adjourned to the house to toast his memory.

O'Kelly hired a poet to fling his last defiance on Eclipse's tomb at Highflyer and his sire, King Herod, whose ancestor, the famous Byerley Turk, bore King William through the battle of the Boyne. The poet produced the following epitaph:

Praise to departed worth! illustrious steed.
Nor the famed Phenicus of Pindar's ode,
O'er thee, Eclipse, possessed transcendent speed,
When by a keen Newmarket jockey rode.

Though from the hoof of Pegasus arose
Inspiring Hippocrene, a fount divine,
A richer stream superior merit shows—
Thy matchless foot produced O'Kelly wine.

True, o'er the tomb in which this favorite lies
No vaunting boast appears of lineage good;
Yet the turf register's bright page defies
The race of Herod to show better blood.

George the Fourth, always fond of racing, even after that disagreeable discussion which led to his retirement from the turf, mounted one of Eclipse's hoofs as a cup, and it was a challenge prize for some years at Ascot.

Herring published an engraving of his Eclipse. There was, and probably still is, a painting of the long, low chesnut, with the low withers, at Stockton House, Wiltshire. It is by Sartorius the elder, and represents the horse, mounted by Jack Oakley, going over the Beacon course, at Newmarket. He is going "the pace," with his head very low, his jockey is sitting quite still in his saddle. Both Eclipse's celebrated jockeys died in distress. John Singleton, the first winner of the Doncaster St. Leger, ended in 1776 as a pauper in Chester workhouse, and Jack Oakley in a parish poor-house near Park-lane.

In 1861 there was much controversy in the sporting papers as to whether Mr. Gamgee or his son had or had not obtained from Mr. Bracy Clark, on the payment of one hundred pounds, the skeleton of this famous horse. Many asserted that Eclipse was buried at Cannons, by his proprietor, Dennis O'Kelly. Others stated that the skeleton had ornamented, for the past sixty years, the Veterinary Museum of the Dublin Society.

Jockeys are fond of relics. They make garden chairs out of the bones of favourite racers; they cut slippers out of their skins. There are gold lockets now existing, in which are enclosed precious locks of Eclipse's red chesnut mane. The challenge whip at Newmarket, the tradition goes, was made from Eclipse's tail, and so they say is the wrist-string. The hoofs were reverently preserved, and one of them was mounted in silver, and, with a silver salver, was presented by William the Fourth in 1832 to be run for as a challenge prize at the ensuing Ascot races. When Tattersall's used to be near St. George's Hospital, a picture of Eclipse was hung over the fireplace, above the race-lists and the notices. It was the production of Mr. Garrard. There is also another picture of him with an inscription which declares that "he was never flogged nor spurred," and which also states the fact, extraordinary, if true, that "he was a roarer," perhaps from cold caught in his rough poaching days.

A few remarks on the introduction of Barbary and Arabian horses into England may here not be irrelevant. The first Arabian horse of celebrity was bought by James the First of a merchant for five hundred pounds. It did not succeed as a racer, and the breed for a time fell into disrepute in Great Britain. In Charles the First's reign a lighter and swifter horse began to be bred. Oliver Cromwell, a true country gentleman at heart, and very fond of racing, hunting, and all active sports, kept a racing-stud. The manager of this establishment, Mr. Place, possessed the famous White Turk, whose descendants were valuable in improving the breed of English racers. Charles the Second, an excellent rider, had several valuable mares sent him from our colony in Tangiers. The Barb mare was given by the Emperor of Morocco to Lord Arlington, secretary to King Charles the Second. The Turk was brought into England by the Duke of Berwick, in the reign of James the Second. It was part of the duke's spoil at the siege of Buda. The Selaby Turk was the property of Mr. Marshall, the stud groom of King William, Queen Anne, and George the First. After Queen Anne's time, many valuable Eastern stallions and mares were imported. The Brown Arabian and the Golden Arabian were added to Lord Northumberland's stud about 1760. The Damascus Arabian arrived in Yorkshire the same year. The Cullen Arabian was a somewhat early importation. Racers now cannot do what their predecessors did. They have neither the speed nor the staying power. That patriarch of the turf, Sir Charles Bunbury, who died in 1821, and whose horse, Diomed, won the first Derby stakes at Epsom in 1780, introduced the vicious custom of running horses at two years old, before their full strength had ripened. Lighter weights at once became necessary, and the horses, prematurely enervated, left offspring inferior to themselves in speed and endurance.

Unhappily one of the worst signs of our

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own time is presented in connection with horse-racing—in itself an innocent, perhaps a useful recreation. The vice of betting has been consolidated into a regular profession, preying on dupes in all ranks, from peers to apprentices. Ancestral domains, and the stolen contents of shop-tills, equally change hands through the agency of the turf. Clubs, banks, and markets have been established for the convenience of the knaves, and the fools who bet. Their transactions are quoted with grim regularity, like the prices of the public funds; and they have a special literature of their own, which, from its success, proves the turf-gambling public to have enormously increased since the days of Eclipse.

SAVED FROM THE SEA.

"The Albert medal, presented by the Queen in person." Such is a record found in the Registry of Wrecks and Casualties on the British coast, opposite the name of Samuel Popplestone, farmer, Start Point, Devon. This is the only Albert medal given in the year 1866 for the rescue of drowning men.

On the 23rd of March, in that year, the barque Spirit of the Ocean, with a crew of eighteen hands, and twenty-four passengers became unmanageable in a gale from that most fatal quarter, the south-west. Part of the crew were down in sickness, yearning with the impatience of sick men to breathe the pure air of England. They had just heard the pleasant news that the ship was nearing the land, and that by to-morrow they would see their friends at home. But the wind rose, and soon blew fiercely. The mates and passengers worked at the pumps and rigging for the precious life, but could do nothing. Soon the currents caught the ship, and bore her swiftly towards the shore. The sails had been torn in ribbons. Popplestone, from the crags above, saw that if the vessel failed to clear a ledge of rocks running treacherously out into the sea, she would be lost. On the instant, he sent one of his labourers to rouse the unconscious villagers of Torr Cross, and then clambered down the cliffs alone. Striding, scrambling, leaping from rock to rock, often falling from the slippery ridges, often sinking in holes covered by deceitful sea-weed, often staggered by the storm, or lifted from his feet by a hissing rush of angry water, he struggled on, and at last gained the outer line of rock over which the sea rolled with awful power. But by this time the ship had struck, and, beaten against the rocks by every wave, was rapidly breaking up. There were fewer souls on board her now, for an avalanche of water had swept more than one-half away. These poor souls lay fixed firmly in crevices among the cliffs, or were torn piecemeal on the sharp-edged reef. Still Popplestone sees garments fluttering in the wind; and though he heard no voice, he knew some were there crying out for help. He flung the rope he thoughtfully had carried with him towards the ship. On the moment a mountain wave lifted up the black hull, as if to crush him down, but the same wave lifted him from the ledge, and, like a piece of drift-wood, rolled him from rock to rock to the very base of the cliffs. Torn, bleeding, almost exhausted, he took breath, and stood on his feet again. The hull still outside the reef ground and grated against the pitiless ledge. There were still two if not three black figures upon the wreck. He struggled on his painful way again. Fortunately he reached the ledge, and flung his rope, which he never parted with while rolling along the reef. First, the mate seized the cord, and was dragged to the beach; then one of the crew was saved; but looking out before flinging his rope again, Popplestone saw nothing but a tangled mass of broken timbers, and all the men were dead but two. Popplestone, with the mate and seaman, managed to reach the base of the cliffs, while the waves rushed round and over them, and they were in safety.

All round the coast of England, and especially where long close files of funereal marks indicate on the Wreck Chart, the frequency of wreck and death, a little red boat printed in colours shows where a lifeboat lies under its shed, ready to be pushed through the wild surf the moment a vessel is known to be in danger in the offing. In the year 1866 two hundred and seven of them kept sentinel in the harbours and creeks of England. When the mercury fell, or the scud flew thick and fast, the coxswain of each boat looked to her and saw that all was in the proper place and ready. A gun heard booming over the roar of the storm, a blue-light revealing for a moment the gloomy cliffs, the breakers, and the peril of the ship, were enough. The whole village is now upon the beach, clergymen, gentry, physicians, seamen, insensible to the storm or rain. Under the shelter of the pier, or boat-house, the women flock together. They know that husbands, sons and brothers will go out, and that a lifeboat's crew is not always safe. While the sea tears up the beach and rattles a deluge of stones and sand and sea-wrack up the village street, the boatmen launch the lifeboat. Volunteers of all grades are not wanting. No man thinks of peril when seamen and passengers are in the jaws of death. The great difficulty is to get the boat once clear from shore. She is pushed out perhaps with all her crew on board—men who could tell of many a danger shared together. Three, four, five times, the boat may be driven back, but the sea shall be mastered. The men are careless of hurts or bruises. If one be disabled there are twenty to fill his place, and even women claim to pull an oar with their husbands or their lovers. They all know the story of Grace Darling. But the men *will* go; married or single, old or young. If possible the lifeboat is placed under the lee, of the ship in danger, while the wrecked men drop one by one into the arms of the rescuers, or trust themselves to the waves. Not seldom, are both

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crew and passengers powerless through cold and exhaustion to do anything to save themselves, like that Algerine sailor, in the wreck of the Oasis a few days since, who could not even speak, and lay for twenty-four hours on the deck after the rest of the crew had been taken off. But some two or three of the lifeboat's crew climb up by broken cordage, or the shattered figure-head, and let the helpless or the wounded gently down. Not till the last man is in do they return to shore. Often the boat, just as it nears the beach, is sucked back by the waves; often the oarsmen pull as if through a solid mass of sea, above and below. They watch for the coming of a billow on whose crest they may be borne in. There are a hundred eager hands ready to seize the boat and keep her steady and safe from the back wash of the waves. But the deep is treacherous, and villages on the coast have had cause to mourn not seldom, when, as if indignant at the rescue of its prey, the sea overturns the lifeboat just as all seemed safe, and grinds to death the rescuer and the rescued.

Of these two hundred and fifty-seven boats, one hundred and eighty-six belong to that noble society, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Forty-two are owned by harbour boards or boatmen. Some of these boats are thank-offerings from affluent persons who have not forgotten to be grateful for their own rescue from drowning. Others have been given by mothers and wives in memory of the preservation of sons or husbands.

The "wards" granted for special services vary in kind and in value. Sometimes they amount to four pounds, three pounds, or two pounds each. On one occasion the sum allowed was but fifteen shillings each man. But even when a drowning man was apparently less an object of public concern than a bale of cotton, the lifeboats were cheerfully manned by daring crews. No seaman ever thought of a possible reward when he dashed through the surf to a sinking ship.

GEORGE SILVERMAN'S EXPLANATION.

By Charles Dickens.

IN NINE CHAPTERS. SIXTH CHAPTER.

Brother Hawkyard (as he insisted on my calling him) put me to school, and told me to work my way. "You are all right, George," he said. "I have been the best servant the Lord has had in his service, for this five-and-thirty year (O, I have!), and he knows the value of such a servant as I have been to him (O yes he does!), and he'll prosper your schooling as a part of my reward. That's what *he'll* do, George. He'll do it for me."

From the first I could not like this familiar knowledge of the ways of the sublime inscrutable Almighty, on Brother Hawkyard's part. As I grew a little wiser and still a little wiser, I liked it less and less. His manner, too, of confirming himself in a parenthesis: as if, knowing himself, he doubted his own word: I found distasteful. I cannot tell how much these dislikes cost me, for I had a dread that they were worldly.

As time went on, I became a Foundation Boy on a good Foundation, and I cost Brother Hawkyard nothing. When I had worked my way so far, I worked yet harder, in the hope of ultimately getting a presentation to College, and a Fellowship. My health has never been strong (some vapour from the Preston cellar cleaves to me I think), and what with much work and some weakness, I came again to be regarded—that is, by my fellow-students—as unsocial.

All through my time as a Foundation-Boy, I was within a few miles of Brother Hawkyard's congregation, and when ever I was what we called a Leave-Boy on a Sunday, I went over there at his desire. Before the knowledge became forced upon me that outside their place of meeting these Brothers and Sisters were no better than the rest of the human family, but on the whole were, to put the case mildly, as bad as most, in respect of giving short weight in their shops, and not speaking the truth: I say, before this knowledge became forced upon me, their prolix addresses, their inordinate conceit, their daring ignorance, their investment of the Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth with their own miserable meannesses and littlenesses, greatly shocked me. Still, as their term for the frame of mind that could not perceive them to be in an exalted state of Grace, was the "worldly" state, I did for a time suffer tortures under my inquiries of myself whether that young worldly-devilish spirit of mine could secretly be lingering at the bottom of my non-appreciation.

Brother Hawkyard was the popular expounder in this assembly, and generally occupied the platform (there was a little platform with a table on it, in lieu of a pulpit), first, on a Sunday afternoon. He was by trade a drysalter. Brother Gimblet, an elderly man with a crabbed face, a large dog's-eared shirt collar, and a spotted blue neckerchief reaching up behind to the crown of his head, was also a drysalter, and an expounder. Brother Gimblet professed the greatest admiration for Brother Hawkyard; but (I had thought more than once) bore him a jealous grudge.

Let whosoever may peruse these lines kindly take the pains here to read twice, my solemn pledge that what I write of the language and customs of the congregation in question, I write scrupulously, literally, exactly, from the life and the truth.

On the first Sunday after I had won what I had so long tried for, and when it was certain that I was going up to College, Brother Hawkyard concluded a long exhortation thus:

"Well my friends and fellow-sinners, now I told you when I began, that I didn't know a word of what I was going to say to you (and No, I did not!) but that it was all one to me, because

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I knew the Lord would put into my mouth the words I wanted."

("That's it!" From Brother Gimblet.)

"And he did put into my mouth the words I wanted."

("So he did!" From Brother Gimblet.)

"And why?"

("Ah! Let's have that!" from Brother Gimblet.)

"Because I have been his faithful servant for five-and-thirty years, and because he knows it. For five-and-thirty years! And he knows it, mind you! I got those words that I wanted, on account of my wages. I got 'em from the Lord, my fellow-sinners. Down. I said 'Here's a heap of wages due; let us have something down on account.' And I got it down, and I paid it over to you, and you won't wrap it up in a napkin, nor yet in a towel, not yet in a pockethankercher, but you'll put it out at good interest. Very well. Now my brothers and sisters and fellow-sinners, I am going to conclude with a question, and I'll make it so plain (with the help of the Lord, after five-and-thirty years, I should rather hope!) as that the Devil shall not be able to confuse it in your heads. Which he would be overjoyed to do."

("Just his way. Crafty old blackguard!" from Brother Gimblet.)

"And the question is this. Are the Angels learned?"

("Not they. Not a bit on it." From Brother Gimblet, with the greatest confidence.)

"Not they. And where's the proof? Sent ready-made by the hand of the Lord. Why, there's one among us here now, that has got all the Learning that can be crammed into him. *I* got him all the Learning that could be crammed into him. His grandfather" (this I had never heard before) "was a Brother of ours. He was Brother Parksop. That's what he was. Parksop. Brother Parksop. His worldly name was Parksop, and he was a Brother of this Brotherhood. Then wasn't he Brother Parksop?"

("Must be. Couldn't help hisself." From Brother Gimblet.)

"Well. He left that one now here present among us, to the care of a Brother-Sinner of his (and that Brother-Sinner, mind you, was a sinner of a bigger size in his time than any of you, Praise the Lord!), Brother Hawkyard. Me. *I* got him, without fee or reward—without a morsel of myrrh, or frankinsence, nor yet Amber, letting alone the honeycomb—all the Learning that could be crammed into him. Has it brought him into our Temple, in the spirit? No. Have we had any ignorant Brothers and Sisters that didn't know round O from crooked S, come in among us meanwhile? Many. Then the Angels are *not* learned. Then they don't so much as know their alphabet. And now, my friends and fellow-sinners, having brought it to that, perhaps some Brother present—perhaps you, Brother Gimblet—will pray a bit for us?"

Brother Gimblet undertook the sacred function, after having drawn his sleeve across his mouth, and muttered: "Well! I don't know as I see my way to hitting any of you quite in the right place neither." He said this with a dark smile, and then began to bellow. What we were specially to be preserved from, according to his solicitations, was despoilment of the orphan, suppression of testamentary intentions on the part of a Father or (say) Grandfather, appropriation of the orphan's house-property, feigning to give in charity to the wronged one from whom we withheld his due; and that class of sins. He ended with the petition, "Give us peace!" Which, speaking for myself, was very much needed after twenty minutes of his bellowing.

Even though I had not seen him when he rose from his knees, steaming with perspiration, glance at Brother Hawkyard; and even though I had not heard Brother Hawkyard's tone of congratulating him on the vigour with which he had roared; I should have detected a malicious application in this prayer. Unformed suspicions to a similar effect had sometimes passed through my mind in my earlier school-days, and had always caused me great distress, for they were worldly in their nature, and wide, very wide, of the spirit that had drawn me from Sylvia. They were sordid suspicions, without a shadow of proof. They were worthy to have originated in the unwholesome cellar. They were not only without proof, but against proof. For, was I not myself a living proof of what Brother Hawkyard had done? And without him, how should I ever have seen the sky look sorrowfully down upon that wretched boy at Hoghton Towers?

Although the dread of a relapse into a state of savage selfishness was less strong upon me as I approached manhood, and could act in an increased degree for myself, yet I was always on my guard against any tendency to such relapse. After getting these suspicions under my feet, I had been troubled by not being able to like Brother Hawkyard's manner, or his professed religion. So it came about, that as I walked back that Sunday evening, I thought it would be an act of reparation for any such injury my struggling thoughts had unwillingly done him, if I wrote, and placed in his hands before going to College, a full acknowledgment of his goodness to me, and an ample tribute of thanks. It might serve as an implied vindication of him against any dark scandal from a rival Brother, and Expounder, or from any other quarter.

Accordingly, I wrote the document with much care. I may add with much feeling, too, for it affected me as I went on. Having no set studies to pursue, in the brief interval between leaving the Foundation and going to Cambridge, I determined to walk out to his place of business and give it into his own hands.

It was a winter afternoon when I tapped at the door of his little counting-house, which was at the further end of his long low shop. As I did so (having entered by the back yard, where casks and boxes were taken in, and where there was the inscription "Private Way to the Counting-house"), a shopman called to me from the counter that he was engaged.

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"Brother Gimblet," said the shopman (who was one of the Brotherhood), "is with him."

I thought this all the better for my purpose, and made bold to tap again. They were talking in a low tone, and money was passing, for I heard it being counted out.

"Who is it?" asked Brother Hawkyard, sharply.

"George Silverman," I answered, holding the door open. "May I come in?"

Both Brothers seemed so astounded to see me, that I felt shyer than usual. But they looked quite cadaverous in the early gaslight, and perhaps that accidental circumstance exaggerated the expression of their faces.

"What is the matter?" asked Brother Hawkyard.

"Aye! What is the matter?" asked Brother Gimblet.

"Nothing at all," I said, diffidently producing my document. "I am only the bearer of a letter from myself."

"From yourself, George?" cried Brother Hawkyard.

"And to you," said I.

"And to me, George?"

He turned paler, and opened it hurriedly; but looking over it, and seeing generally what it was, became less hurried, recovered his colour, and said: "Praise the Lord!"

"That's it!" cried Brother Gimblet. "Well put! Amen."

Brother Hawkyard then said, in a livelier strain: "You must know, George, that Brother Gimblet and I are going to make our two businesses, one. We are going into partnership. We are settling it now. Brother Gimblet is to take one clear half of the profits. (O yes! And he shall have it, he shall have *it* to the last farthing!)"

"D.V.!" said Brother Gimblet, with his right fist firmly clenched on his right leg.

"There is no objection," pursued Brother Hawkyard, "to my reading this aloud, George?"

As it was what I expressly desired should be done, after yesterday's prayer, I more than readily begged him to read it aloud. He did so, and Brother Gimblet listened with a crabbed smile.

"It was in a good hour that I came here," he said, wrinkling up his eyes. "It was in a good hour likewise, that I was moved yesterday to depict for the terror of evil-doers, a character the direct opposite of Brother Hawkyard's. But it was the Lord that done it. I felt him at it, while I was perspiring."

After that, it was proposed by both of them that I should attend the congregation once more, before my final departure. What my shy reserve would undergo from being expressly preached at and prayed at, I knew beforehand. But I reflected that it would be for the last time, and that it might add to the weight of my letter. It was well known to the Brothers and Sisters that there was no place taken for me in *their* Paradise, and if I showed this last token of deference to Brother Hawkyard, notoriously in despite of my own sinful inclinations, it might go some little way in aid of my statement that he had been good to me, and that I was grateful to him. Merely stipulating, therefore, that no express endeavour should be made for my conversion—which would involve the rolling of several Brothers and Sisters on the floor, declaring that they felt all their sins in a heap on their left side, weighing so many pounds avoirdupoise—as I knew from what I had seen of those repulsive mysteries—I promised.

Since the reading of my letter, Brother Gimblet had been at intervals wiping one eye with an end of his spotted blue neckerchief, and grinning to himself. It was, however, a habit that Brother had, to grin in an ugly manner even while expounding. I call to mind a delighted snarl with which he used to detail from the platform, the torments reserved for the wicked (meaning all human creation, except the Brotherhood), as being remarkably hideous.

I left the two to settle their articles of partnership, and count money; and I never saw them again but on the following Sunday. Brother Hawkyard died within two or three years, leaving all he possessed to Brother Gimblet, in virtue of a will dated (as I have been told) that very day.

Now, I was so far at rest with myself when Sunday came, knowing that I had conquered my own mistrust, and righted Brother Hawkyard in the jaundiced vision of a rival, that I went, even to that coarse chapel, in a less sensitive state than usual. How could I foresee that the delicate, perhaps the diseased, corner of my mind, where I winced and shrunk when it was touched or was even approached, would be handled as the theme of the whole proceedings?

On this occasion, it was assigned to Brother Hawkyard to pray, and to Brother Gimblet to preach. The prayer was to open the ceremonies; the discourse was to come next. Brothers Hawkyard and Gimblet were both on the platform: Brother Hawkyard on his knees at the table, unmusically ready to pray: Brother Gimblet sitting against the wall, grinningly ready to preach.

"Let us offer up the sacrifice of prayer, my brothers and sisters and fellow-sinners." Yes. But it was I who was the sacrifice. It was our poor sinful worldly-minded Brother here present, who was wrestled for. The now-opening career of this our unawakened Brother might lead to his becoming a minister of what was called The Church. That was what *he* looked to. The Church. Not the chapel, Lord. The Church. No rectors, no vicars, no archdeacons, no bishops, no archbishops, in the chapel; but, O Lord, many such in the Church! Protect our sinful Brother from his love of lucre. Cleanse from our unawakened Brother's breast, his sin of worldly-mindedness. The prayer said infinitely more in words, but nothing more to any intelligible effect.

Then Brother Gimblet came forward, and took (as I knew he would) the text, My kingdom is not of this world. Ah! But whose

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was, my fellow-sinners? Whose? Why, our Brother's here present was. The only kingdom he had an idea of, was of this world. ("That's it!" from several of the congregation.) What did the woman do, when she lost the piece of money? Went and looked for it. What should our brother do when he lost his way? ("Go and look for it," from a Sister.) Go and look for it. True. But must he look for it in the right direction, or in the wrong? ("In the right," from a Brother.) There spake the prophets! He must look for it in the right direction, or he couldn't find it. But he had turned his back upon the right direction, and he wouldn't find it. Now, my fellow-sinners, to show you the difference betwixt worldly-mindedness and unworldly-mindedness, betwixt kingdoms not of this world and kingdoms *of* this world, here was a letter wrote by even our worldly-minded Brother unto Brother Hawkyard. Judge, from hearing of it read, whether Brother Hawkyard was the faithful steward that the Lord had in his mind only t'other day, when, in this very place, he drew you the picter of the unfaithful one. For it was him that done it, not me. Don't doubt that!

Brother Gimblet then grinned and bellowed his way through my composition, and subsequently through an hour. The service closed with a hymn, in which the Brothers unanimously roared, and the Sisters unanimously shrieked, at me, that I by wiles of worldly gain was mock'd, and they on waters of sweet love were rock'd; that I with Mammon struggled in the dark, while they were floating in a second Ark.

I went out from all this, with an aching heart and a weary spirit; not because I was quite so weak as to consider these narrow creatures, interpreters of the Divine majesty and wisdom; but because I was weak enough to feel as though it were my hard fortune to be misrepresented and misunderstood, when I most tried to subdue any risings of mere worldliness within me, and when I most hoped that, by dint of trying earnestly, I had succeeded.

COGERS.

A LONG low room like the saloon of a large steamer. Wainscot dimmed and ornaments tarnished by tobacco-smoke and the lingering dews of steaming compounds. A room with large niches at each end, like shrines for full-grown saints, one niche containing "My Grand" in a framework of shabby gold, the other, "My Grand's Deputy" in a bordering more substantial. My Grand is not a piano, but a human instrument of many keys, to whom his deputy acts as pitchfork; not merely in tuning power, but as a record of the versatility and extensive range of his chief's play. More than one hundred listeners are waiting patiently for my Grand's utterances this Saturday night, and are whiling away the time philosophically with bibulous and nicotian refreshment. The narrow tables of the long room are filled with students and performers, and quite a little crowd is congregated at the door and in a room adjacent until places can be found for them in the presence-chamber. "Established 1755" is inscribed on the ornamental signboard above us, and "Instituted 1756" on another signboard near. Dingy portraits of departed Grands and deputies decorate the walls, and the staidly convivial people about us are the traditional representatives of oratorial champions of a century ago. We are visiting the Ancient Society of Cogers, whose presiding spirit is uniformly addressed as "My Grand," and whose deputy or secretary commences the proceedings by reading the minutes of the latest discussion, and retreating behind a newspaper, as if to abstract himself like some lofty spirit sublimely superior to the petty hum and strife of mortals below. But first let me make a humiliating confession. I had up to this night been guilty of grave injustice to this venerable society. To my darkened understanding "Coger" had been "Codger," and I had taken a grave and complimentary title for a stroke of facetious and corrupt slang. "What? Origin of the name Codger, Old Codger, sir!" said the landlord, aghast, during our preliminary visit of inquiry. "Call it 'Coger'" (making his mouth like a cart-wheel)—"call it 'Coger,' if *you* please, for it comes from cogitate, and signifies 'Thoughtful Men.' The Cogers, sir, have always been calm and deliberative politicians. The great John Wilkes was a Coger, sir" (this in a convincing tone, as if further testimony to calmness would be absurd); "and there's first-rate speeches here—young barristers from the Temple, and a great many literary men, writers in the newspapers and gentlemen who take an interest in public affairs. You've perhaps heard of Sergeant Thrust—a Coger, sir, in his youth; so was the late Lord Macgregor and the present Judge Owlet; and though the speaking varies, of course, you may allus count upon hearing some that's first class, and if you wouldn't mind remembering that it's Coger, not Codger, and means 'Thoughtful Men,' I'm sure the gentlemen would be happy to see you, and perhaps to hear you speak. There is no charge for admission, and visitors may come in without being introduced. It's just a public-room with a society meeting in it, and every one present is permitted to take part in the evening's discussion; but if a member wishes to speak, of course he takes precedence over a stranger. The niches, as you call 'em, sir, are alcoves for the Grand and the Vice-Grand to sit in; and these two Grands are, with the secretary, elected every 14th June, between ten and eleven at night, by show of hands among the members. This has been the way, sir, ever since 1755, when Mr. Daniel Mason founded the society, and it has prospered wonderfully and done a deal of good. Those portraits are of gentlemen who used to speak here. That dingy one with the dim eyes was a great speaker.

On the following Saturday we make up a small party at a Pall-mall club, and, proceeding eastward, are in due course seated in the long low

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room. Punctually at nine My Grand opens the proceedings amid profound silence. The deputy buries himself in his newspaper, and maintains as profound a calm as the Speaker "in another place." I have seen the parliamentary functionary open the arms of his massive state chair, which have "practicable" lids, and, taking out writing materials, scribble private letters on his knee during the long and dull debates, and have smiled at the straits to which the first commoner in England has been reduced. My Grand's deputy continues to imitate the Speaker in his profound abstraction, while my Grand himself pours out an even flood of rhetoric. "The events of the week" form the subject of discussion, and the orator opens the ball by an epitome of the newspaper intelligence of the last seven days. The digest of a weekly newspaper is fairly comprehensive, but my Grand exceeds this in versatility and length. Giving running comments as he goes, he passes from Bethnal-green and the poor laws, to Italy and the Pope; from the last phase of Fenianism to the natural perfidy of Napoleon; from the decisions of the police magistrates of London to King Theodore's victims in Abyssinia. My Grand is sarcastic on "the hopeless dulness of the middle-class intellect;" and when complimentary to the charity and personal usefulness of Roman Catholic priests, it is as an honourable opponent who pats a vanquished enemy on the back. He is satirical again upon the enormous stupidity of governments in general, and the transcendent ignorance and fatuity of the British Government in particular. He denounces Fenianism, pities distress, sympathises with misfortune, approves right, and denunciates wrong; while the Thoughtful Men about him sip their glasses gravely, emit huge columns of smoke, and give meditative grunts of approval or dissent. The most perfect order is preserved. The Speaker or deputy, who seems to know all about it, rolls silently in his chair: he is a fat dark man, with a small and rather sleepy eye, such as I have seen come to the surface and wink lazily at the fashionable people clustered round a certain tank in the Zoological Gardens. He refolds his newspaper from time to time, until deep in the advertisements. The waiters silently remove empty tumblers and tankards, and replace them full. But My Grand commands profound attention from the room, and a neighbour, who afterwards proved a perfect Boanerges in debate, whispered to us concerning his vast attainments and high literary position.

This chieftain of the Thoughtful Men is, we learn, the leading contributor to a newspaper of large circulation, and, under his signature of "Locksley Hall," rouses the sons of toil to a sense of the dignity and rights of labour, and exposes the profligacy and corruption of the rich to the extent of a column and a quarter every week. A shrewd, hard-headed man of business, with a perfect knowledge of what he had to do, and with a humorous twinkle of the eye, my Grand went steadily through his work, and gave the Thoughtful Men his epitome of the week's intelligence. It seemed clear that the Cogers had either not read the newspapers, or liked to be told what they already knew. They listened with every token of interest to facts which had been published for days, and it seemed difficult to understand how a debate could be carried on when the text admitted so little dispute. But we sadly underrated the capacity of the orators near us. The sound of my Grand's last sentence had not died out, when a fresh-coloured, rather aristocratic-looking elderly man, whose white hair was carefully combed and smoothed, and whose appearance and manner suggested a very different arena to the one he waged battle in now, claimed the attention of the Thoughtful ones. Addressing "Mee Grand" in the rich and unctuous tones which a Scotchman and Englishman might try for in vain, this orator proceeded, with every profession of respect, to contradict most of the chief's statements, to ridicule his logic, and to compliment him with much irony on his overwhelming goodness to the society "to which I have the honour to belong. Full of that hard *northern* logic" (much emphasis on "northern," which was warmly accepted as a hit by the room)—"that hard northern logic which demonstrates everything to its own satisfaction; abounding in that talent which makes you, sir, a leader in politics, a guide in theology, and generally an instructor of the people; yet even you, sir, are perhaps, if I may say so, somewhat deficient in the lighter graces of pathos and humour. Your speech, sir, has commanded the attention of the room. Its close accuracy of style, its exactitude of expression, its consistent argument, and its generally transcendent ability will exercise, I doubt not, an influence which will extend far beyond this chamber, filled as this chamber is by gentlemen of intellect and education, men of the time, who both think and feel, and who make their feelings and their thoughts felt by others. Still, sir," and the orator smiles the smile of ineffable superiority, "grateful as the members of the society you have so kindly alluded to ought to be for your countenance and patronage, it needed not" (turning to the Thoughtful Men generally, with a sarcastic smile)—"it needed not even Mee Grand's encomiums to endear this society to its people, and to strengthen their belief in its efficacy in time of trouble, its power to help, to relieve, and to assuage. No, Mee Grand, an authoritee whose dictum even you will accept without dispute—mee Lord Macaulee—that great historian whose undying page records those struggles and trials of constitutionalism in which the Cogers have borne no mean part—mee Lord Macaulee mentions, with a respect and reverence not exceeded by Mee Grand's utterances of to-night," (more smiles of mock humility to the room) "that great association which claims me as an unworthy son. We could, therefore, have dispensed with the recognition given us by Mee Grand; we could afford to wait our time until the nations of the earth are fused by one common wish for each other's benefit, when the principles of Cogerism are spread over the civilised world, when justice reigns supreme,

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and loving-kindness takes the place of jealousy and hate." We looked round the room while these fervid words were being triumphantly rolled forth, and were struck with the calm impassiveness of the listeners. There seemed to be no partisanship either for the speaker or the Grand. Once, when the former was more than usually emphatic in his denunciations, a tall pale man, with a Shakespeare forehead, rose suddenly, with a determined air, as if about to fiercely interrupt; but it turned out he only wanted to catch the waiter's eye, and this done, he pointed silently to his empty glass, and remarked, in a hoarse whisper, "Without sugar as before."

However strongly these thoughtful people may have felt, they made no sign, and it was obvious that the discipline of the society is fairly and regularly enforced, and that, if its debates effect no other good, they encourage a habit of self-control. It was equally obvious that the society has a profound belief in its own power. The whole tenor of the debates led us to assume that the eye of Europe was upon us. If a Coger went wrong in argument, or if a mis-statement were allowed to pass uncorrected in such an assembly as this, the consequences would, it was evident, be terrible to the world at large and to generations still unborn.

In the course of the evening the Cogers declared that the East-end distress would be a thing of the past, if their own specific for pauperism were adopted. They also held a strong opinion that the metropolitan police arrangements should be efficient, instead of unsatisfactory, and laid down a clear and intelligible theory on the subject. As for the government, "the big-wigs," the secretaries of state, their doorkeepers, their flunkeys, their officials, their ways, their deeds, their talk, they were all nowhere. The great difficulty to mere outsiders like ourselves was the impossibility of holding two diametrically opposite opinions at the same time. What one eloquent Coger had made clear as daylight, another Coger, with equal gifts of speech, showed us to be mere hollow rodomontade. As soon as the sentiments first named had sunk into our souls and become incorporated with our intellectual being, presto! another set of sentiments were hurled at us with so much precision and force as to leave us prostrate and bemuddled. Thus, according to the Cogers, Ireland was unhappy, not for the reasons given by other Cogers, but from causes familiar to the Cogers speaking now, and so on through the subjects dealt with. A subspicing of personality lent flavour to the proceedings, and there could not be a doubt that each individual Coger had the keenest delight in hearing himself speak. We will go further, and say that the speeches were very much above the average of those served out by many British senators to their constituents, and that some of them contained passages of true eloquence, overlaid and spoilt, it may be, by wordiness, but appealing directly to those addressed, and showing a fair comprehension of the subject dealt with. To say that no one was convinced by his neighbour's reasoning is but to repeat the stale sarcasm of the government-whip, who never, in all his experience, knew a speech, however powerful, change a single vote on the division list. There were prejudiced speeches, and a few, not many, grossly ignorant speeches; there were rather rabid speeches, and speeches which were self-contradictory. But the staple of the evening's entertainment was healthy and sound. There was a rough-and-ready, cut-and-thrust style about many of the remarks which savoured of the platform, and would be invaluable on the hustings, and a dogmatism which would have done credit to a county bench. But in no case did a speaker flag for lack of words. There was none of that painful stammering, that morbid affection of the throat, that restless shifting from leg to leg, that nervous fidgetiness of hands and buttons, that deliberate dying out from inanition, which distinguish the oratory of so many English gentlemen. What the Cogers have to say they say out like men. The ideas may be sometimes feeble, but the language never is; aspirates may be occasionally dropped, but the thread of the discourse is always held. It is my happiness to number many ex-members of both universities among my friends, and to have frequently been with them when a brief speech has been necessary—a few words to an expectant tenantry, an improvised address to the school-children of a parish, a resolution to be brought forward at a public meeting, or the proposal of a friend's health at a local dinner; and, with scarcely one exception, the English language has suffered terribly at their hands. Why should this be? It is no disparagement to the Cogers to say that the bulk of them have not had a tithe of the educational advantages enjoyed by the people I name. The wooden pencil and round-topped scissors peeping from the left side waistcoat-pocket of the fiery young liberal who has just sat down, proclaim him a draper's assistant; the ponderous knuckles and creased and rather dirty hands of the listener in hob-nails, together with his well-worn corduroys and flannels, show that his "'ear, 'ear" (followed by a relishing whisper to a neighbour, "That's right, ain't it?") proceeds from a man engaged on manual labour; and we judge by the dress, demeanour, and appearance of the foxy little person who came in without his hat, and who throughout the evening moves upon his chair as if ready to burst forth with indignant interruption, but who, when his turn comes, speaks with moderation and good sense, that he is a master-tradesman in the neighbourhood. As for the young barristers and the literary gentlemen, we are bound to say that there was nothing to distinguish their oratory from that of the rest of the room. Indeed, all the members of the latter class were pointed out to us as so extremely eminent that they rather disappointed our expectations. But even including these gentlemen in our estimate, there is nothing to show that they are not, like the rest of the room, self-taught orators, and that the fluency possessed by the Cogers might not be

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learnt in the schools. It has been well said, "Everybody improvises when he talks." But the silence of an auditory, when once a speaker perceives it, produces a very contrary effect o the interruption of conversation. "All eyes being fixed on him, he is embarrassed, he stammers, and at length becomes dumb; but this is not a defect of genius, it is merely a want of self-possession. He is a weak man; he is not master of his palpatating heart; he has lost his self-possession; his calm judgment has abandoned him; hence he sees nothing that he ought to see; he can compare nothing; he has lost the standard by which he ought to measure himself and others; he has lost genius, because he has lost the balance of judgment. Hence the first rule of *improvisation*, acquire the mastership of your own feelings." Mr. Robert Lowe's recent recommendation to the middle-classes to study the English language culminated in the assertion, that he had found the power of speaking that language with precision and force to be the most useful of his accomplishments.

If the ruling spirits at Cogers' Academy can turn out a fluent speaker in a few months, it is surely a disgrace to Eton and Harrow that they allow their pupils to come and go, and fail to make them speak ten consecutive words in public without breaking down? There are few more lamentable spectacles than that presented by a gentleman of well-trained mind and varied knowledge stammering feebly, and retiring ignominiously, before a handful of people who are immeasurably his inferiors in all that pertains to mental discipline and education. Their charitable eagerness to cheer him whenever a lame and floundering sentence is brought to an impotent conclusion is positively insulting. The applause when he sits down, the hand-clapping, and the foot-stamping fill him with shame; for he knows himself to have talked nonsense, and to have talked nonsense cumbrously. "Men are never so likely to settle a question rightly," says Macaulay, "as when they discuss it freely;" and though an older writer cynically tells us that as "we have two ears, and but one tongue, we may hear much and talk little," even he could give no good reason why we should not talk that little well. What the Cogers can do is of course within the reach of every schoolmaster, and the wise man who teaches the art of speaking the language with, as the old grammars say, "elegance and propriety," will confer a boon on England. We left the hall while a gentleman was convicting, entirely to his own satisfaction, a previous speaker of ignorance of his subject; our friend, the landlord, meeting us with the courteous hope that we "had been interested, though the speaking ain't been nothin' to-night to what it is sometimes." The landlord regards the Cogers affectionately as his adopted children, but rather startles us by giving, "I won't have none of it here" as his mode of checking a debate when freedom degenerates into licence. It appears that the ardent liberalism of some advanced Cogers has occasionally led to language which a feeble-minded magistrate might disapprove, and it is perhaps with an ulterior eye on licensing-day that mine host constitutes himself the unseen arbiter of the limits of debate. Upon the whole, however outspoken and revolutionary the bolder Coger spirits may occasionally be, the ancient society has a comfortable respect for order and propriety, and maintains, as its rules and our experience testify, a decent self-respect and self-restraint which might sometimes be imitated with advantage in another place.

ENGLISH ROYAL AUTHORS.

Two works which, though not distinctly acknowledged, are perfectly well known to emanate from a royal source, have lately attracted much notice. The latter of these especially, "Our Life in the Highlands," has been so much discussed, that it seems only rational to suppose that the interest which has been manifested by all sorts of people in a particular specimen of royal authorship may be associated with some curiosity about royal authorship generally, and that those who have been eager to read what has been written by Queen Victoria may care also to hear a little about what has been written hundreds of years ago by Queen Victoria's predecessors on the throne.

The question, which among our English rulers was the first whom we may regard as having belonged to the literary brotherhood, is involved in a good deal of obscurity. Legends are in existence of literary compositions produced by Alfred the Great, by another Alfred (King of Northumberland), by Canute, Boadicea, and even by King Bladud, discoverer of the medicinal virtues of the Bath waters. The works of these distinguished sovereigns have however—if they ever existed at all—disappeared entirely from among the records of the past.

The first work of an English royal author on the authenticity of which reliance can be placed appears to be a poem or ballad composed by Richard the First in the French or Provençal dialect, and of which more than one translation has been attempted. Of this ballad, written in prison, it may certainly be said that there is, pervading the whole, a tone of sadness, and a sense of desertion and loneliness, which are not without beauty. One or two verses, selected at random from this poem, may interest the reader. We give them first in the curiously attractive old French dialect, and then as translated, not very successfully, by a learned antiquary of the last century. Between the two some idea may be formed of the nature of the ballad. In the first verse quoted, Richard speaks of his own clemency to prisoners who had fallen into his power, in former times, and makes that a reason why similar leniency should be shown to him. The old French runs thus:

Or sachon ben mi hom et mi baron,
Engles, Norman, l'ettavin, et Guascon,
Qe ge n'avoie si povre compagnon,

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Q'en laissasse, per aver, en pasison.
Ge n'el di pas por nulla retraison ;
Mas anquar soi ge pris !

This verse has been translated:

Full well they know, my lords and nobles all,
Of England, Normandy, Guienne, Poictou,
Ne'er did I slight my poorest vassal's call,
But all whom wealth could buy from chains withdrew.
Not in reproach I speak, nor idly vain,
But I alone unpitied bear the chain.

Here is another gallant appeal:

Mi compagnon cui j'amoi, e cui j'am,
Cil de Chaill e cil de Persarain,
Di lor, chanzon (q'il non sont pas certain)
Unca vers els non oi cor fals ni vain !
S'il me guerroient, il feron qe vilain,
Tan com ge soia pris.

And its translation:

To these my friends long loved and ever dear,
To gentle Chaill and kind Persarain,
Go forth, my song, and say, whate'er they hear,
To them my heart was never false or vain.
Should they rebel—but no; their souls disdain
With added weight to load a captive's chain.

Richard was fond of the society of the poets and troubadours of his time. It has been said of him that "he drew over singers and jesters from France to chant panegyrics of him about the streets," and also, that "he could make stanzas on the eyes of gentle ladies." Perhaps the troubadours whom he "drew over," used to help him with his poems; at all events, we know that on one occasion he worked with a *collaborateur*—the celebrated Blondel, of whom the reader does not hear now for the first time.

The next of our royal authors, chronologically, is but slenderly represented by a single poem of doubtful authenticity. This is a sort of penitential dirge, said to have been written by Edward the Second, while he was a prisoner in Carnarvon Castle. Authorities differ about the genuineness of this poem. It is written in Latin, and would certainly not repay quotation. No prose writings are attributed to this unhappy prince, nor to his predecessor, Cœur de Lion. Indeed, the royal authors of this remote time seem, unlike those of more modern days, to have all aimed at the attainment of poetic fame. Rumour says that Richard the Second made "ballads and songs, rondeaus and poems," and there is a similar legend extant concerning Henry the Fifth. This sovereign, it is said "whilst Prince of Wales, admiring the courage and conduct of a famous virago, named Elphletda, is reported to have made certain Latin verses in commendation of her." There appears to be more ground for believing in certain verses which are assigned by tradition to the next Henry, and which seem to accord well with the nature of the man of whom Granger said that "a monk's cowl would have fitted this prince's head much better than a crown." The poem is a short one, at any rate.

Kingdomes are but cares,
State ys devoid of staie,
Ryches are redy snares,
And hastene to decaie.

Pleasure ys a pryvie prycke
Wich vice doth styll provoke ;
Pompe, unprompt ; and fame, a flame ;
Powre, a smouldrying smoke.

Who meenethe to remoofe the rocke
Owte of the slymie mudde,
Shall myre hymselfe, and hardlie scape
The swellynge of the flodde.

Horace Walpole says of these lines that they are "melancholy and simple as we should expect, and not better than a saint might compose."

We come now to a literary monarch of a very different type. Henry the Eighth, "Defender of the Faith," showed himself worthy of this proud title bestowed on him by Leo the Tenth, in devoting his pen chiefly to subjects of a polemical nature. The title-page of his great work runs thus: "Assertion of the Seven Sacraments against Martin Luther, edited by the most invincible King of England, France, and Ireland, Henry the Eighth of that name." All sorts of reports and arguments have been used to disprove the genuineness of this "Defence." One of them, that the style of it is different from Henry's love-letters to Anne Boleyn, which are acknowledged to be authentic, seems of but little value, the love-letter of most literary characters being generally rather unlike their more serious efforts. An argument, however, of greater force is to be found in the fact that this "Defence" is contained in full (as well as the second letter, which was called forth by Luther's reply to the first) among the collected works of Bishop Fisher. However this may be, it is certain that Henry the Eighth had a distinct taste for polemical discussion, proved by his epistles to the Dukes of Saxony, to Erasmus, and other of his authentic published works. His arguments were always hot and strong and pungent. One of his supposed works teaches such Christianity "as Henry chose to compound out of his old religion and his new." It is an exposition of the creed, as he chose it should be believed, of the seven sacraments (all which "he was pleased" to retain), "of the Ten Commandments; of the Paternoster; of the angel's salutation to Mary; of the doctrines of free will, justification and good works; and concludes with an authorised prayer for departed souls." The alacrity with which our bluff King Hal turned to subjects of a theological character may be accounted for by the nature of the education which his father gave him; for it was intended, while his brother lived, that he should be the future Archbishop of Canterbury.

The list of literary productions attributed to Henry is a full one, he being the reputed author, in addition to the "Assertion of the Seven Sacraments," and many other official letters on kindred subjects, of the following: "An Introduction to Grammar;" "A Book of Prayers;" "Preface by the King to his Primer;" "De Potestate regiâ contra Papam;" "De Christiani Hominis Institutione, lib. 1;" "De Instituendâ Pube, lib. 1;" "Sententiam de Mantuano Consilio, lib. 1;" and "De justo in

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Scotos Bello." Only one of them, the Treatise on the Christian Life, alluded to above, is in existence.

There is one other form of literature which this big monarch seems to have cultivated, that requires a moment's notice. The Defender of the Faith condescended to dally awhile with the Muses, perhaps as a relaxation from his grave theological studies. Unhappily, only one result of these dallyings has survived for our benefit. This sonnet, as it is called, was composed, as we are told, by the king "when he conceived love for Anna Bulleign." "And hereof," says the old chronicler from whom we quote, "I entertain no doubt of the author; for if I had no better reason than the rhyme, it were sufficient to think that no other than such a king could write such a sonnet." What this sly gentleman may mean by this very doubtful remark the reader must decide for himself after perusal of the lines.

The eagle's force subdues eache byrd that flyes—
What metal can resyst the flaminge fyre?
Doth not the sunne dazle the cleareste eyes,
And melte the ice, and make the froste retyre?
The hardest stones are peircede thro' wyth tools;
The wysest are, with princes, made but fools.

The unhappy lady to whom this brilliant effusion was addressed comes next in the list of royal authors. Some of her letters and addresses to her merciless lord have survived, and are sufficiently well known. There are passages in all of these which are infinitely pathetic, as when she says: "From a private station you have raised me to that of a countess; from a countess you have made me a queen; you can now only raise me one step higher—to be a saint in heaven." The tone of all that she says is so womanly, gentle, and resigned that one would almost have thought the inaccessible heart of Henry the Eighth might have been touched by the sight of such unresisting helplessness. Here are a couple of specimen verses, said, with some doubt, to have been written by Anne Boleyn. They are at least sad enough to be genuine:

Defiled is my name full sore,
Through cruel spyte and false report,
That I may say for evermore,
Farewell, my joy! adewe, comfórt!
For wrongfully ye judge of me,
Unto my fame a mortall wounde.
Say what ye lyst, it will not be—
Ye seek for that cannot be found.

O death! rocke me on sleepe!
Bring me on quiet reste!
Let passe my verye guiltless goste,
Out of my carefull brest:
Toll on the passinge bell
Ringe out the dolefull knell
Let the sounde my dethe tell
For I must dye;
There is no remedy,
For now I dye.

A better right than Anne Boleyn's to the title of author seems to have been established by another of the numerous wives of our Defender of the Faith. The learned and astute Katherine Parr has left a long list of literary productions almost all of which are of a religious nature. Perhaps her literary piety was assumed by Katherine with the idea that it might prove a bond of union between her and her dangerous husband. For in all things this discreet lady seems to have sought to ingratiate herself with the grisly tyrant, flattering and cajoling him as women often do when they fall into unscrupulous hands. "Thanks," she writes in the introduction to one of her published books, "bee given unto the Lorde that hath now sent us suche a godly and learned king in these latter days to reign over us, that with the vertue and force of God's wurde hath taken away the vailes and mists of errors, and brougt us to the knowledge of the trueth by the lighte of God's wurde." . . . . "But our Moyses, and most godly wise governor and king, hath delivered us out of the captivitie and bondage of Pharao. I meane by this Moyses, Kyng Henry the Eight! my moste soverayne favourable lord and husband." Adroit flattery this, surely, and proving the woman who used it to have been a wise one, if not entirely sincere and aboveboard.

The list of works attributed to Katherine Parr is too long for quotation. Among them are: Prayers and Meditations; Queen Katherine Parr's Lamentation of a Sinner; A Latin Epistle to the Lady Mary, entreating Her to let the Translation of Erasmus's Paraphrase on the New Testament be published in her Highness's name.

The concluding words of the last quoted title page furnishes a clue to the origin of treatises, expositions, letters, and other compositions set down by the chroniclers as the bonâ fide productions of those royal gentlemen and ladies who have striven to excel in literature. In the case of Edward the Sixth, which comes next before us chronologically, this way out of an otherwise great difficulty suggests itself at once. Numerous and erudite compositions are given by common report to this young prince, which it is difficult to conceive, were executed by an inexperienced boy, however naturally gifted. One of the first works attributed to him is a comedy, of all things, not, indeed, a comedy according to our modern acceptation of the term, but something more resembling the ancient mysteries; of which it has been said that "all the subjects were religious, all the conduct farcical." Besides this imputed comedy, Edward wrote with his own hand—the manuscript still existing—The Sum of a Conference with the Lord Admiral. He was the author, moreover, of A Method for the Proceedings in the Council, of King Edward the Sixth's own Arguments against the Papal Supremacy, and two books said to have been written before he was twelve years of age —L'Encontre des Abus du Monde, and a translation into French of several passages of Scripture. Nor are these somewhat severe exercises all. Several Epistles and Orations, both in Greek and Latin, are ascribed to the boy by his many historians and biographers, besides a

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treatise De Fide, addressed to the Duke of Somerset. All sorts of letters too on the most weighty subjects, and addressed to persons of consideration and worship, are attributed to him; also a long poem, of a religious nature, and not too meritorious to have been the work of a very young prince.

"A Diary or Journal of Passing Events," kept by this gifted boy, is still preserved, and is said to "give clear proof of his sense, knowledge, and goodness;" and there is also in existence a very curious paper in his own handwriting, containing memoranda of matter to be submitted to his Privy Council for consideration. It is headed, "Ceirtein Pointes of waighty matters to be immediately concluded on by my counsell. 18 Januarii, 1551," the different subjects which are to be investigated being set down in order. Some of these serve as specimens of the rest: "1. The conclusion for the payment of our dettis in February next comming. 3. The matter for the Duke of Somersete and his confederates to be considered as aparteineth to our surety and quietnes of our realme, that by their punishement and execution, according to the lawes, example may be shewed to others. 4. The resolution for the bishops that be nominated. 6. Dispaching our commissionare to Guisnes, to see the state thereof."

It is impossible, in examining the private papers left by this prince, not to be reminded of those boyish writings of Prince Albert with which we have lately become familiar. There is the same love of method, the same early religion—the same early steadiness of purpose and high principle, and the same continual desire for self-improvement.

For some unaccountable reason, Queen Mary—she to whose name a terrible adjective is commonly appended—has got to be included among the list of royal authors. There seems, however, to be little enough ground for such inclusion. Certain prayers and religious meditations, "Against the assaults of vice," "A meditation touching adversity," and the like, have been preserved as hers, as well as several letters, some of them curious, as one in which she treats of her own delicacy in never having written but to three men in her life, and another concerning her affection for her sister. A claim to the title of author is, however, hardly to be established on such slender grounds.

Of all our female sovereigns, Elizabeth seems to have cultivated literature the most closely and sedulously. She is, unquestionably, the royal authoress par excellence. The age in which she lived was one in which letters pre-eminently flourished, and the queen was not behindhand in catching the spirit of the time. Her pen was, indeed, a most prolific one. Some thirty or forty prose pieces alone are attributed to her. Letters of the official sort she produced without end, besides translations from the classics, speeches, orations, and treatises on religious subjects or on the poetic art. Some of the titles of these miscellaneous prose writings are curious, and deserve to be transcribed: A Century of Sentences, dedicated to her father; A Curious Letter to Lord Burleigh; Another of Humour, to divert him from retiring from business; A Very Genteel Letter, written by her, when princess, to King Edward, on his desiring her picture. In the same list with these we find mention of A Comment on Plato; Two of the Orations of Isocrates, translated into Latin; A Play of Euripides, likewise translated into Latin; A Translation of a Dialogue out of Xenophon, in Greek, between Hiero, a king, yet sometime a private person, and Simonides, a poet, as touching the Liffe of the Prince and Private Man. Her classical attainments, if we are to believe all we read, were prodigious. She seems to have thought nothing of such small tasks as translating Sallust de Bello Jugurthino; Horace de Arte Poeticâ; and Plutarch de Curiositate, thinking nothing of them. Indeed, her knowledge of Latin was so great that she was able to give an immediate epigrammatic answer to whatever was addressed to her in that language. On one occasion, when some pert Latin verses were sent to her by Philip the Second, she retorted "instantly," as the chronicler tells us, with a neat hexameter. At another time, "being asked if she preferred the learning of Buchanan or of Walter Haddon, she replied"—again on the spur of the moment—"Buchananum omnibus antepono, Haddonum nemini postpono." One other of her answers, in English this time, when pressed hard by "a captious theologic question"—nothing less, in fact, than a required definition of the Eucharist—is almost too well known to need quotation here:

> Christ was the Word that spake it;
> He took the bread and brake it;
> And what that word did make it,
> That I believe and take it.

Two of Queen Elizabeth's more studied poetical effusions survive. One is a paraphrase of the Thirteenth Psalm, and is not particularly successful, as the subjoined extract will show:

> Fooles, that true fayth yet never had,
> Saythe in their hartes, There is no God,
> Fylthy they are in their practyse,
> Of them not one is godly wyse.

This is not much worse, however, than other metrical versions of the Psalms. There were "two little anthemes, or things in meeter, of hir majestie," licensed to her printer in 1578, of which this is probably one. This active and ambitious lady also translated The Speech of the Chorus in the Second Act of the Hercules Œtæus of Seneca. This is a poem of one hundred and twenty-three lines in blank verse, and nearly unintelligible throughout. Here is a difficult passage:

> Though with thy gleaves and axes thou be armed,
> And root full great doe glory give thy name:
> Amid the viewe of all these sundrie sorte
> One faultles fayth her roome even franke may claime.
> The golden ledge full wrathfull spites beset,
> And where the gates their postes draw forth by breadth,
> More easie way to guiles and passed safe:

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Speed then the clerkes of warned harmes with good,
And let the hidden blade noe wrong thee worke:
For when most shewe by gazers eyen is spide,
And presence great thy honour most advance,
This gift retaine as fellowe to thy roome:
Disdain may frowne, but envy thrust thee through.

The queen's poetical efforts seem to have been highly esteemed by the learned men of her own day. "But last in recitall," says one of these, "first in degree, is the quene, our sovereigne lady, whose learned, delicate, noble muse, easily surmounteth all the rest that have written before her time or since, for sense, sweetnesse, and subtillitie, be it in ode, elegie, epigram, or any other kinde of poeme, wherein it shall please her majestie to employ her penne." Nor are such panegyrics confined to Elizabeth's poetical performances. Roger Ascham in one of his treatises indignantly rebukes the "young gentlemen of England" for allowing themselves to be outdone in diligence and application by a "mayd who goes beyond them all in excellencie of learnyng and knowledge of divers tonges;" while Savile, in his translation of Tacitus, goes a step further, and says, "The principall cause of undertaking my translation was to incite your majestie by this, as by a foile, to communicate to the world, if not those admirable compositions of your owne, yet at the least those most rare and excellent translations of histories, if I may call them translations which have *so infinitely exceeded the originals*." The queen seems to have been far from indifferent to these tributes of admiration, and those who knew her weakness would often take advantage of her passion for praise, and further the advancement of their own objects by pandering to it. James the First may be regarded—it is not saying much for him after all—as the chief among the royal authors. His works are well known, easily accessible, and little doubt has ever been thrown on their authenticity. One of the earliest of them is the "Basilicon Doron." It is a treatise on the art of government, and it is on this composition, more than on such fanciful performances as the "Dæmonologia" or the "Counterblast to Tobacco," that James's literary reputation is thought to rest. As some publishers quote in their advertisements the "opinions of the press" on the works whose merits they are setting forth, so might the opinions of the press of James's time—the learned writers, namely, of those and subsequent days—be quoted in favour of this voluminous essay. Camden says, "that in this book is most elegantly pourtrayed and set forth the pattern of a most excellent, every way accomplished king." Bacon considered it as "excellently written." Locke described its author as "that learned king who well understood the notions of things," and Hume says that "whoever will read the 'Basilicon Doron,' particularly the two last books, will confess James to have possessed no mean genius." Such were the "favourable criticisms" of these illustrious persons, to which must be appended, to make the "opinions" complete, certain lines by a contemporary poet on the death of Prince Henry, to whom this wonderful book was originally "given," as the phrase of the time goes, or as we now say, dedicated. Speaking of the death of the prince, this courtier poet says,

I grieve the lesse
Thy kingly gift so well prevaild to make him
Fit for a crowne of endlesse happinesse,
And that it was th' Almightie's hand did take him,
Who was himself a book for kings to pore on,
And migh have bin thy Basilikon Doron.

A few sentences extracted from this much praised treatise will serve to give the reader some idea of the general nature of the book. Here is something about the conspicuousness of the position occupied by a king:

"It is a true olde saying, that a king is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures all the people gazingly doe beholde: and therefore, although a king be never so precise in the discharging of his office, the people, who seeth but the outward part, will ever judge of the substance by the circumstances; and according to the outward appearance, if his behaviour be light or dissolute, will conceive pre-occupied conceite of the king's inward intention. . . . Be carefull, then, my sonne, so to frame all your indifferent actions and outward behaviour, as they may serve for the furtherance and forthsetting of your inward vertuous disposition. . . . The whole indifferent actions of a man I divide in two sorts: in his behaviour in things necessarie, as food, sleeping, raiment, speaking, writing, and gesture; and in things not necessarie, though convenient and lawfull, as pastimes or exercises, and using of companie for recreation."

But the Basilicon, with all its ponderous and sententious wisdom, is hardly the kind of production which most characteristically displays the peculiar bent of King James's genius—such as it was. This sovereign seems to have aimed at a certain whimsicality and fancy in his writings far more than any of his predecessors. The comic element pervades them, indeed, throughout. The well-known "Counterblast to Tobacco"—spoken of by Horace Walpole as being made up of "quotations, puns, scripture, witticisms, superstitions, oaths, vanity, prerogative, and pedantry"—is an excellent specimen of the peculiar bias of James's clumsy humour. So is the "Demonologia," a treatise undertaken, as its royal author informs us, "not in anywise to serve as a shew of learning and ingine, but onely to resolve the doubting harts of many, that such assaultes of Sathan are most certainly practized, and that the instrumentes thereof merit most severly to be punished: against the damnable opinions of two principally; whereof the one called Scot, an Englishman, is not ashamed in publike print to deny that there can be such a thing as witchcraft; and the other, called Wierus, a German physition, sets out a public apologie for all these craftes-folkes." By these two works—the Demonologia and the Counterblast—James is said to have lost as much reputation as he had gained by his Basilicon. He

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was not behind his predecessors in cultivating the poetic faculty. He brought out a small collection entitled "His Majesty's Poetical Exercises at vacant Houres," which, even this vainest of monarchs does not seem to be very well satisfied with. He says in his preface, apologising for their want of revision that, "When his ingyne" (a favourite word, evidently) "and age could, his affaires and fasherie would not permit him to correct them—scarslie but at stolen moments, he having the leisure to blenk upon any paper."

It was a time when puns, and all sorts of literary quips and quirks were much in vogue. The king was not behindhand in following this peculiar and distressing fashion. James greeted his Scottish subjects on a certain solemn occasion with a string of punning rhymes on the names of their most learned professors, Adamson, Fairlie, Sands, Young, Reid, and King.

As Adam was the first of men, whence all beginning tak;
So Adam-son was president, and first man in this act.(!)
The theses Fair-lie did defend, which, though they lies contain
Yet were fair lies, and he the sam right fairlie did maintein.
The field first entred Master Sands, and there he made me see
That not all sands are barren sands, but that some fertile bee.
Then Master Young most subtilie the theses did impugne,
And kythed old in Aristotle, although his name be Young.
To him succeeded Master Reid, who, though Reid be his name,
Neids neither for his disput blush, nor of his speech think shame.
Last entered Master King, the lists, and dispute like a king,
How reason reigning as a queene should anger underbring.
To their deserved praise have I then playd upon their names,
And will their colledge hence be cald the Colledge of King James.

Charles the First was an author of a graver type than his father. His chief work, which, it is said, went, first and last, through forty-seven impressions, was called Icon Basilikè, a title resembling somewhat that of the opus magnum of James. This book—the authorship of which, by-the-by, has been disputed—has won golden opinions from Hume, Smollett, Bishop Horne, D'Israeli—critics who judged of its merits long after the death of its supposed author, and who cannot, therefore, be suspected of flattery. Charles was the author, besides, of some papers on Church Government, of various Prayers and Religious Exercises, of some Letters on Public Questions of the day, and of a poem on his own sufferings and sorrows, written during his captivity at Carisbrook.

Charles the Second is supposed to be the author of a certain song of an amatory nature, and his brother James, a little more industrious, wrote Memoirs of his own Life and Campaigns, besides sundry letters of a political nature, and a collection of Meditations, Soliloquies, and Vows, published with a frontispiece representing himself sitting in a chair in a pensive attitude, and *crowned with thorns*.

The wife of William the Third has left behind her only one small literary claim. An anagram on the name of Roger l'Estrange, a gentleman of whose exploits contemporary history is very full. The anagram,

Roger L'Estrange,
Lying strange Roger.

For the rest—though the reign of Anne was pre-eminently a period of literary activity—the queen herself was not infected by the prevailing taste; while as to the house of Hanover it is certainly not too much to say that its present representative has shown a greater taste for literary pursuits than any one of her ancestors.

The work of our latest royal author is by this time known to everybody. We therefore propose to note down no more than one or two distinctive characteristics which separate it so remarkably from any of the literary productions published by some of the queen's predecessors on the English throne. Let the reader be mindful of those religious treatises, those theological disquisitions, those translations from the classics, and, lastly, those quaint poetical effusions which we have just been examining. Let him recal any of the elaborately formal or grimly fantastic compositions which we have noticed, and then turn to these unpretending "Leaves." Had their author merely been actuated by a desire to "write a book," she might easily have chosen some ambitious subject, and, with the help at her disposal, might have produced an appropriate successor to those treatises and disquisitions which have been mentioned above. Queen Victoria, however, has simply written a record of the experiences and impressions of a very happy period of her life, to recal them when one of the chief elements which made this happiness so great has passed away. Would Queen Mary, with the dreadful prefix to her name, have gone to see those old women in their Highland cottages, and carried good cheer, moral as well as physical, among them? Would vain Elizabeth have enjoyed scrambling about Scotch mountains, hiding away out of sight when the deer were stalked, and being carried, slung in a plaid, over the swollen mountain torrents?

For all these things were enjoyed by the writer of the Highland journal, and enjoyed in no ordinary degree. The unaffected pleasure which the author of The Highland Journal derived from everything that she saw and did is expressed in almost every line, and in a manner which is one of the chief attractions of the book. During a walk which the queen and the prince took soon after their arrival at Blair Athol, which is suggestive of a great measure of enjoyment. They have been rambling on the hills near the house. "We were high up," says the queen, "but could not get to the top; Albert in such delight, it is a happiness to see

him, he is in such spirits. . . . We walked on to a corn-field where a number of women were cutting and reaping the oats (shearing they call it in Scotland), with a splendid view of the hills before us, so rural and romantic, so unlike our daily Windsor walk." And then she adds, "delightful as that is," as if afraid of disparaging poor old Windsor, and as if remembering what happiness exists for her there also.

There is no scene or experience described in this book which does not receive a reflected light from the sunshine which fills the heart of the writer. All sorts of small things excite her wonder and delight—the Leith fishwomen with their white caps and bright-coloured petticoats, or a Highland lassie in the river, "with her dress tucked up almost to her knees, washing potatoes." All is delightful, because all is seen under such happy circumstances.

Doubtless, too, the new sensation of being free gives an additional zest to the royal pleasure. The getting away from London, from drawing-rooms and levees, and to a great extent from state cares and state conferences—though there was always a cabinent minister on the premises at Balmoral, like a memento mori at a feast—the getting away from all these things to be simply a lady living with her husband and children in a Highland château must have been a new and delightful feeling. We can see that it is so. A hundred passages in this volume which tell of the queen's keen enjoyment of that wild unfettered life which the annual journey to the Highlands put within her reach. "I was delighted," she says, on one occasion, "to go on à l'improviste, travelling in these enchanting hills, in their solitude, with only our good Highlanders with us." And in another place, when the time of leaving Scotland is near, she speaks of her liberty as one of the losses she is about to sustain. "Every little trifle and every spot I had become attached to, our life of quiet and liberty, everything was so pleasant, and all the Highlanders and people who went with us I had got to like so much."

That moment of leaving Scotland seems always to have been a very bitter one. The queen's attachment to this country, indeed, is almost beyond that of a native. Over and over again she breaks out in raptures respecting the scenery, the hills, the people, the very air she breathes. She kindles with delight when she again touches Scotch soil after having been for some time absent, and her sorrow at turning her back on the lochs and mountains when the annual holiday is over, is genuine and unaffected. "Alas! our last day in Scotland" is a phrase of frequent recurrence in these diaries, and once, when there was a heavy fall of snow on the morning of the day which was their last at Balmoral for the season, her majesty exclaims, "I wished we might be snowed up, and unable to move. How happy I should have been, could it have been so!" Nor must one source of enjoyment — the greatest of all—be forgotten. In the Highlands the queen saw more of her beloved prince than elsewhere: walking with him, riding with him, reading with him, or sketching by his side continually.

There are some curious scenes put before the reader in this glimpse behind the curtain of what is literally a Theatre *Royal*. The narrative of the arrival at the castle of the tidings of the taking of Sevastopol, beginning with a description of the state of expectancy in which the house was kept all day by rumours which had reached Balmoral, and ending with an account of the arrival of telegrams in the evening, containing the decisive news, "Sevastopol is in the hands of the allies," is very bright and stirring. The lighting of the bonfire upon the cairn at the top of the hill, and the efforts to get up a display of fireworks by the poor old Frenchman, François d'Albertançon, "who lighted a number of squibs, the greater part of which would not go off," are among the memorials of an interesting time at Balmoral.

Equally interesting and well described is that other almost historical scene in which we are shown how the news of "The Duke's" death came upon the holiday party. In this case, also, there seems to have been a preliminary rumour of the truth, which was disregarded, the party at the castle going away for the day on one of their customary excursions. Then comes that curious incident of the queen missing her watch—the gift of the duke—from her side, and sending a messenger back to the house to see that it was safe, and then the return of the messenger with tidings of the watch, and with a bundle of letters, among which are two which tell the news of the old duke's death.

It is curious to read of these public events in the journal of one so deeply interested in them. The sight of such records sets one speculating whether any of our more remote sovereigns kept journals of this sort, and if so, what sort of notices of the public occurrences of the day were contained in them. A diary of Henry the Eighth's, for instance, with an entry made on the day when the news of Wolsey's death reached him, would certainly be a curiosity of some value. The tone of any such entry would, however, it is to be feared, have differed widely from such expressions of grief as those to be found in the Journal of Queen Victoria, written on Thursday, September 16, 1852.

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THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XIII.

I found my lady in her own sitting-room. She started, and looked annoyed, when I mentioned that Sergeant Cuff wished to speak to her.

"*Must* I see him?" she asked. "Can't you represent me, Gabriel?"

I felt at a loss to understand this, and showed it plainly, I suppose, in my face. My lady was so good as to explain herself.

"I am afraid my nerves are a little shaken," she said. "There is something in that police-officer from London which I recoil from—I don't know why. I have a presentiment that he is bringing trouble and misery with him into the house. Very foolish, and very unlike *me*; but so it is."

I hardly knew what to say to this. The more *I* saw of Sergeant Cuff, the better I liked him. My lady rallied a little after having opened her heart to me—being, naturally, a woman of a high courage, as I have already told you.

"If I must see him, I must," she said; "but I can't prevail on myself to see him alone. Bring him in, Gabriel, and stay here as long as he stays."

This was the first attack of the megrims that I remembered in my mistress since the time when she was a young girl. I went back to the "boudoir." Mr. Franklin strolled out into the garden, and joined Mr. Godfrey, whose time for departure was now drawing near. Sergeant Cuff and I went straight to my mistress's room.

I declare my lady turned a shade paler at the sight of him! She commanded herself, however, in other respects, and asked the Sergeant if he had any objection to my being present. She was so good as to add, that I was her trusted adviser, as well as her old servant, and that in anything which related to the household I was the person whom it might be most profitable to consult. The Sergeant politely answered that he would take my presence as a favour, having something to say about the servants in general, and having found my experience in that quarter already of some use to him. My lady pointed to two chairs, and we set in for our conference immediately.

"I have already formed an opinion on this case," says Sergeant Cuff, "which I beg your ladyship's permission to keep to myself for the present. My business now is to mention what I have discovered upstairs in Miss Verinder's sitting-room, and what I have decided (with your ladyship's leave) on doing next."

He then went into the matter of the smear on the paint, and stated the conclusions he drew from it—just as he had stated them (only with greater respect of language) to Superintendent Seegrave. "One thing," he said, in conclusion, "is certain. The Diamond is missing out of the drawer in the cabinet. Another thing is next to certain. The marks from the smear on the door must be on some article of dress belonging to somebody in this house. We must discover that article of dress before we go a step further."

"That discovery," remarked my mistress, "implies, I presume, the discovery of the thief?"

"I beg your ladyship's pardon—I don't say the Diamond is stolen. I only say, at present, that the Diamond is missing. The discovery of the stained dress may lead the way to finding it."

Her ladyship looked at me. "Do you understand this?" she said.

"Sergeant Cuff understands it, my lady," I answered.

"How do you propose to discover the stained dress?" inquired my mistress, addressing herself once more to the Sergeant. "My good servants, who have been with me for years, have, I am ashamed to say, had their boxes and rooms searched already by the other officer. I can't and won't permit them to be insulted in that way a second time!"

(There was a mistress to serve! There was a woman in ten thousand, if you like!)

"That is the very point I was about to put to your ladyship," said the Sergeant. "The other officer has done a world of harm to this inquiry, by letting the servants see that he suspected them. If I give them cause to think themselves suspected a second time, there's no knowing what obstacles they may not throw in my way—the women especially. At the same time, their boxes *must* be searched again—for this plain reason, that the first investigation only looked for the Diamond, and that the second investigation must look for the stained dress. I quite agree with you, my lady, that

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the servants' feelings ought to be consulted. But I am equally clear that the servants' wardrobes ought to be searched."

This looked very like a dead lock. My lady said so, in choicer language than mine.

"I have got a plan to meet the difficulty," said Sergeant Cuff, "if your ladyship will consent to it. I propose explaining the case to the servants."

"The women will think themselves suspected directly," I said, interrupting him.

"The women won't, Mr. Betteredge," answered the Sergeant, "if I can tell them I am going to examine the wardrobes of *everybody*—from her ladyship downwards—who slept in the house on Wednesday night. It's a mere formality," he added, with a side look at my mistress; "but the servants will accept it as even dealing between them and their betters; and, instead of hindering the investigation, they will make a point of honour of assisting it."

I saw the truth of that. My lady, after her first surprise was over, saw the truth of it too.

"You are certain the investigation is necessary?" she said.

"It's the shortest way that I can see, my lady, to the end we have in view."

My mistress rose to ring the bell for her maid. "You shall speak to the servants, with the keys of my wardrobe in your hand."

Sergeant Cuff stopped her by a very unexpected question.

"Hadn't we better make sure first," he asked, "that the other ladies and gentlemen in the house will consent, too?"

"The only other lady in the house is Miss Verinder," answered my mistress, with a look of surprise. "The only gentlemen are my nephews, Mr. Blake and Mr. Ablewhite. There is not the least fear of a refusal from any of the three."

I reminded my lady here that Mr. Godfrey was going away. As I said the words, Mr. Godfrey himself knocked at the door to say good-bye, and was followed in by Mr. Franklin, who was going with him to the station. My lady explained the difficulty. Mr. Godfrey settled it directly. He called to Samuel, through the window, to take his portmanteau up-stairs again, and he then put the key himself into Sergeant Cuff's hand. "My luggage can follow me to London," he said, "when the inquiry is over." The Sergeant received the key with a becoming apology. "I am sorry to put you to any inconvenience, sir, for a mere formality; but the example of their betters will do wonders in reconciling the servants to this inquiry." Mr. Godfrey, after taking leave of my lady, in a most sympathising manner, left a farewell message for Miss Rachel, the terms of which made it clear to my mind that he had not taken No for an answer, and that he meant to put the marriage question to her once more, at the next opportunity. Mr. Franklin, on following his cousin out, informed the Sergeant that all his clothes were open to examination, and that nothing he possessed was kept under lock and key. Sergeant Cuff made his best acknowledgments. His views, you will observe, had been met with the utmost readiness by my lady, by Mr. Godfrey, and by Mr. Franklin. There was only Miss Rachel now wanting to follow their lead, before we called the servants together, and began the search for the stained dress.

My lady's unaccountable objection to the Sergeant seemed to make our conference more distasteful to her than ever, as soon as we were left alone again. "If I send you down Miss Verinder's keys," she said, "I presume I shall have done all you want of me for the present?"

"I beg your ladyship's pardon," said Sergeant Cuff. "Before we begin, I should like, if convenient, to have the washing-book. The stained article of dress may be an article of linen. If the search leads to nothing, I want to be able to account next for all the linen in the house, and for all the linen sent to the wash. If there is an article missing, there will be at least a presumption that it has got the paint-stain on it, and that it has been purposely made away with, yesterday or to-day, by the person owning it. Superintendent Seegrave," added the Sergeant, turning to me, "pointed the attention of the women-servants to the smear, when they all crowded into the room on Thursday morning. That *may* turn out, Mr. Betteredge, to have been one more of Superintendent Seegrave's many mistakes."

My lady desired me to ring the bell, and order the washing-book. She remained with us until it was produced, in case Sergeant Cuff had any further request to make of her after looking at it.

The washing-book was brought in by Rosanna Spearman. The girl had come down to breakfast that morning miserably pale and haggard, but sufficiently recovered from her illness of the previous day to do her usual work. Sergeant Cuff looked attentively at our second housemaid—at her face, when she came in; at her crooked shoulder, when she went out.

"Have you anything more to say to me?" asked my lady, still as eager as ever to be out of the Sergeant's society.

The great Cuff opened the washing-book, understood it perfectly in half a minute, and shut it up again. "I venture to trouble your ladyship with one last question," he said. "Has the young woman who brought us this book been in your employment as long as the other servants?"

"Why do you ask?" said my lady.

"The last time I saw her," answered the Sergeant, "she was in prison for theft."

After that, there was no help for it, but to tell him the truth. My mistress dwelt strongly on Rosanna's good conduct in her service, and on the high opinion entertained of her by the matron at the Reformatory. "You don't suspect her, I hope?" my lady added, in conclusion, very earnestly.

"I have already told your ladyship that I don't suspect any person in the house of thieving, up to the present time."

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After that answer, my lady rose to go up-stairs, and ask for Miss Rachel's keys. The Sergeant was beforehand with me in opening the door for her. He made a very low bow. My lady shuddered as she passed him.

We waited, and waited, and no keys appeared. Sergeant Cuff made no remark to me. He turned his melancholy face to the window; he put his lanky hands into his pockets, and whistled The Last Rose of Summer drearily to himself.

At last, Samuel came in, not with the keys, but with a morsel of paper for me. I got at my spectacles, with some fumbling and difficulty, feeling the Sergeant's dismal eyes fixed on me all the time. There were two or three lines on the paper, written in pencil by my lady. They informed me that Miss Rachel flatly refused to have her wardrobe examined. Asked for her reasons, she had burst out crying. Asked again, she had said: "I won't, because I won't. I must yield to force if you use it, but I will yield to nothing else." I understood my lady's disinclination to face Sergeant Cuff with such an answer from her daughter as that. If I had not been too old for the amiable weaknesses of youth, I believe I should have blushed at the notion of facing him myself.

"Any news of Miss Verinder's keys?" asked the Sergeant.

"My young lady refuses to have her wardrobe examined."

"Ah!" said the Sergeant.

His voice was not quite in such a perfect state of discipline as his face. When he said "Ah!" he said it in the tone of a man who had heard something which he expected to hear. He half angered and half frightened me—why, I couldn't tell, but he did it.

"Must the search be given up?" I asked.

"Yes," said the Sergeant, "the search must be given up, because your young lady refuses to submit to it like the rest. We must examine all the wardrobes in the house or none. Send Mr. Ablewhite's portmanteau to London by the next train, and return the washing-book, with my compliments and thanks, to the young woman who brought it in."

He laid the washing-book on the table, and, taking out his penknife, began to trim his nails.

"You don't seem to be much disappointed," I said.

"No," said Sergeant Cuff; "I'm not much disappointed."

I tried to make him explain himself.

"Why should Miss Rachel put an obstacle in your way?" I inquired. "Isn't it her interest to help you?"

"Wait a little, Mr. Betteredge—wait a little."

Cleverer heads than mine might have seen his drift. Or a person less fond of Miss Rachel than I was, might have seen his drift. My lady's horror of him might (as I have since thought) have meant that *she* saw his drift (as the scripture says) "in a glass darkly." I didn't see it yet—that's all I know.

"What's to be done next?" I asked.

Sergeant Cuff finished the nail on which he was at work, looked at it for a moment with a a melancholy interest, and put up his pen-knife.

"Come out into the garden," he said, "and let's have a look at the roses."

CHAPTER XIV.

The nearest way to the garden, on going out of my lady's sitting-room, was by the shrubbery path, which you already know of. For the sake of your better understanding of what is now to come, I may add to this, that the shrubbery path was Mr. Franklin's favourite walk. When he was out in the grounds, and when we failed to find him anywhere else, we generally found him here.

I am afraid I must own that I am rather an obstinate old man. The more firmly Sergeant Cuff kept his thoughts shut up from me, the more firmly I persisted in trying to look in at them. As we turned into the shrubbery path, I attempted to circumvent him in another way.

"As things are now," I said, "if I was in your place, I should be at my wits' end."

"If you were in my place," answered the Sergeant, "you would have formed an opinion—and, as things are now, any doubt you might previously have felt about your own conclusions would be completely set at rest. Never mind, for the present, what those conclusions are, Mr. Betteredge. I haven't brought you out here to draw me like a badger; I have brought you out here to ask for some information. You might have given it to me, no doubt, in the house, instead of out of it. But doors and listeners have a knack of getting together, and, in my line of life, we sometimes cultivate a healthy taste for the open air."

Who was to circumvent *this* man? I gave in—and waited as patiently as I could to hear what was coming next.

"We won't enter into your young lady's motives," the Sergeant went on; "we will only say it's a pity she declines to assist me, because, by so doing, she makes this investigation more difficult than it might otherwise have been. We must now try to solve the mystery of the smear on the door—which, you may take my word for it, means the mystery of the Diamond also—in some other way. I have decided to see the servants, and to search their thoughts and actions, Mr. Betteredge, instead of searching their wardrobes. Before I begin, however, I want to ask you a question or two. You are an observant man—did you notice anything strange in any of the servants (making due allowance, of course, for fright and fluster), after the loss of the Diamond was found out? Any particular quarrel among them? Any one of them not in his or her usual spirits? Unexpectedly out of temper, for instance? or unexpectedly taken ill?"

I had just time to think of Rosanna Spearman's sudden illness at yesterday's dinner—but not time to make any answer—when I saw Sergeant Cuff's eyes suddenly turn aside towards

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the shrubbery; and I heard him say softly to himself, "Hullo!"

"What's the matter?" I asked.

"A touch of the rheumatics in my back," said the Sergeant, in a loud voice, as if he wanted some third person to hear us. "We shall have a change in the weather before long."

A few steps further brought us to the corner of the house. Turning off sharp to the right, we entered on the terrace, and went down, by the steps in the middle, into the garden below. Sergeant Cuff stopped there, in the open space, where we could see round us on every side.

"About that young person, Rosanna Spearman?" he said. "It isn't very likely, with her personal appearance, that she has got a lover. But, for the girl's own sake, I must ask you at once whether *she* has provided herself with a sweetheart, poor wretch, like the rest of them?"

What on earth did he mean, under present circumstances, by putting such a question to me as that? I stared at him, instead of answering him.

"I saw Rosanna Spearman hiding in the shrubbery as we went by," said the Sergeant.

"When you said 'Hullo'?"

"Yes—when I said, 'Hullo.' If there's a sweetheart in the case, the hiding doesn't much matter. If there isn't—as things are in this house—the hiding is a highly suspicious circumstance, and it will be my painful duty to act on it accordingly."

What, in God's name, was I to say to him? I knew the shrubbery was Mr. Franklin's favourite walk; I knew he would most likely turn that way when he came back from the station; I knew that Penelope had over and over again caught her fellow-servant hanging about there, and had always declared to me that Rosanna's object was to attract Mr. Franklin's attention. If my daughter was right, she might well have been lying in wait for Mr. Franklin's return when the Serjeant noticed her. I was put between the two difficulties of mentioning Penelope's fanciful notion as if it was mine, or of leaving an unfortunate creature to suffer the consequences, the very serious consequences, of exciting the suspicion of Sergeant Cuff. Out of pure pity for the girl—on my soul and my character, out of pure pity for the girl—I gave the Sergeant the necessary explanations, and told him that Rosanna had been mad enough to set her heart on Mr. Franklin Blake.

Sergeant Cuff never laughed. On the few occasions when anything amused him, he curled up a little at the corners of the lips, nothing more. He curled up now.

"Hadn't you better say she's mad enough to be an ugly girl and only a servant?" he asked. "The falling in love with a gentleman of Mr. Franklin Blake's manners and appearance doesn't seem to *me* to be the maddest part of her conduct by any means. However, I'm glad the thing is cleared up: it relieves one's mind to have things cleared up. Yes, I'll keep it a secret, Mr. Betteredge. I like to be tender to human infirmity—though I don't get many chances of exercising that virtue in my line of life. You think Mr. Franklin Blake hasn't got a suspicion of the girl's fancy for him? Ah! he would have found it out fast enough if she had been nice-looking. The ugly women have a bad time of it in this world; let's hope it will be made up to them in another. You have got a nice garden there, and a well-kept lawn. See for yourself how much better the flowers look with grass about them instead of gravel. No, thank you. I won't take a rose. It goes to my heart to break them off the stem. Just as it goes to your heart, you know, when there's something wrong in the servants' hall. Did you notice anything you couldn't account for in any of the servants when the loss of the Diamond was first found out?"

I had got on very fairly well with Sergeant Cuff so far. But the slyness with which he slipped in that last question put me on my guard. In plain English, I didn't at all relish the notion of helping his inquiries, when those inquiries took him (in the capacity of snake in the grass) among my fellow-servants.

"I noticed nothing," I said, "except that we all lost our heads together, myself included."

"Oh," says the Sergeant, "that's all you have to tell me, is it?"

I answered, with (as I flattered myself) an unmoved countenance, "That is all."

Sergeant Cuff's dismal eyes looked me hard in the face.

"Mr. Betteredge," he said, "have you any objection to oblige me by shaking hands? I have taken an extraordinary liking to you."

(Why he should have chosen the exact moment when I was deceiving him to give me that proof of his good opinion is beyond all comprehension! I felt a little proud—I really did feel a little proud of having been one too many at last for the celebrated Cuff!)

We went back to the house; the Sergeant requesting that I would give him a room to himself, and then send in the servants (the in-door servants only), one after another, in the order of their rank, from first to last.

I showed Sergeant Cuff into my own room, and then called the servants together in the hall. Rosanna Spearman appeared among them, much as usual. She was as quick in her way as the Sergeant in his, and I suspect she had heard what he said to me about the servants in general, just before he discovered her. There she was, at any rate, looking as if she had never heard of such a place as the shrubbery in her life.

I sent them in, one by one, as desired. The cook was the first to enter the Court of Justice, otherwise my room. She remained but a short time. Report, on coming out: "Sergeant Cuff is depressed in his spirits; but Sergeant Cuff is a perfect gentleman." My lady's own maid followed. Remained much longer. Report, on coming out: "If Sergeant Cuff doesn't believe a respectable woman, he might keep his opinion to himself, at any rate!" Penelope went next. Remained only a moment or two.

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Report, on coming out: "Sergeant Cuff is much to be pitied. He must have been crossed in love, father, when he was a young man." The first housemaid followed Penelope. Remained, like my lady's maid, a long time. Report, on coming out: "I didn't enter her ladyship's service, Mr. Betteredge, to be doubted to my face by a low police-officer!" Rosanna Spearman went next. Remained longer than any of them. No report on coming out—dead silence, and lips as pale as ashes. Samuel, the footman, followed Rosanna. Remained a minute or two. Report, on coming out: "Whoever blacks Sergeant Cuff's boots ought to be ashamed of himself." Nancy, the kitchenmaid, went last. Remained a minute or two. Report, on coming out: "Sergeant Cuff has a heart; *he* doesn't cut jokes, Mr. Betteredge, with a poor hard-working girl."

Going into the Court of Justice, when it was all over, to hear if there were any further commands for me, I found the Sergeant at his old trick—looking out of window, and whistling The Last Rose of Summer to himself.

"Any discoveries, sir?" I inquired.

"If Rosanna Spearman asks leave to go out," said the Sergeant, "let the poor thing go; but let me know first."

I might as well have held my tongue about Rosanna and Mr. Franklin! It was plain enough; the unfortunate girl had fallen under Sergeant Cuff's suspicions, in spite of all I could do to prevent it.

"I hope you don't think Rosanna is concerned in the loss of the Diamond?" I ventured to say.

The corners of the Sergeant's melancholy mouth curled up, and he looked hard in my face, just as he had looked in the garden.

"I think I had better not tell you, Mr. Betteredge," he said. "You might lose your head, you know, for the second time."

I began to doubt whether I had been one too many for the celebrated Cuff, after all! It was rather a relief to me that we were interrupted here by a knock at the door, and a message from the cook. Rosanna Spearman *had* asked to go out, for the usual reason, that her head was bad, and she wanted a breath of fresh air. At a sign from the Sergeant, I said, Yes. "Which is the servants' way out?" he asked, when the messenger had gone. I showed him the servants' way out. "Lock the door of your room," says the Sergeant; "and if anybody asks for me, say I'm in there, composing my mind." He curled up again at the corners of the lips, and disappeared.

Left alone, under those circumstances, a devouring curiosity pushed me on to make some discoveries for myself.

It was plain that Sergeant Cuff's suspicions of Rosanna had been roused by something that he had found out at his examination of the servants in my room. Now, the only two servants (excepting Rosanna herself) who had remained under examination for any length of time were my lady's own maid and the first housemaid, those two being also the women who had taken the lead in persecuting their unfortunate fellow-servant from the first. Reaching these conclusions, I looked in on them, casually as it might be, in the servants' hall, and, finding tea going forward, instantly invited myself to that meal. (For, *nota bene*, a drop of tea is, to a woman's tongue, what a drop of oil is to a wasting lamp.)

My reliance on the tea-pot, as an ally, did not go unrewarded. In less than half an hour I knew as much as the Sergeant himself.

My lady's maid and the housemaid had, it appeared, neither of them believed in Rosanna's illness of the previous day. These two devils—I ask your pardon; but how else *can* you describe a couple of spiteful women?—had stolen up-stairs, at intervals during the Thursday afternoon; had tried Rosanna's door, and found it locked; had knocked, and not been answered; had listened, and not heard a sound inside. When the girl had come down to tea, and had been sent up, still out of sorts, to bed again, the two devils aforesaid had tried her door once more, and found it locked; had looked at the keyhole, and found it stopped up; had seen a light under the door at midnight, and had heard the crackling of a fire (a fire in a servant's bed-room in the month of June!) at four in the morning. All this they had told Sergeant Cuff, who, in return for their anxiety to enlighten him, had eyed them with sour and suspicious looks, and had shown them plainly that he didn't believe either one or the other. Hence, the unfavourable reports of him which these two women had brought out with them from the examination. Hence, also (without reckoning the influence of the teapot), their readiness to let their tongues run to any length on the subject of the Sergeant's ungracious behaviour to them.

Having had some experience of the great Cuff's roundabout ways, and having last seen him evidently bent on following Rosanna privately when she went out for her walk, it seemed clear to me that he had thought it unadvisable to let the lady's maid and the housemaid know how materially they had helped him. They were just the sort of women, if he had treated their evidence as trustworthy, to have been puffed up by it, and to have said or done something which would have put Rosanna Spearman on her guard.

I walked out in the fine summer evening, very sorry for the poor girl, and very uneasy in my mind, generally, at the turn things had taken. Drifting towards the shrubbery, there I met Mr. Franklin in his favourite walk. He had been back some time from the station, and had been with my lady, holding a long conversation with her. She had told him of Miss Rachel's unaccountable refusal to let her wardrobe be examined; and had put him in such low spirits about my young lady, that he seemed to shrink from speaking on the subject. The family temper appeared in his face that evening, for the first time in my experience of him.

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"Well, Betteredge," he said, "how does the atmosphere of mystery and suspicion in which we are all living now agree with you? Do you remember that morning when I first came here with the Moonstone? I wish to God we had thrown it into the quicksand!"

After breaking out in that way, he abstained from speaking again until he had composed himself. We walked silently, side by side, for a minute or two, and then he asked me what had become of Sergeant Cuff. It was impossible to put Mr. Franklin off with the excuse of the Sergeant being in my room, composing his mind. I told him exactly what had happened, mentioning particularly what my lady's maid and the housemaid had said about Rosanna Spearman.

Mr. Franklin's clear head saw the turn the Sergeant's suspicions had taken, in the twinkling of an eye.

"Didn't you tell me this morning," he said, "that one of the tradespeople declared he had met Rosanna yesterday, on the foot-way to Frizinghall, when we supposed her to be ill in her room?"

"Yes, sir."

"If my aunt's maid and the other woman have spoken the truth, you may depend upon it the tradesman *did* meet her. The girl's attack of illness was a blind to deceive us. She had some guilty reason for going to the town secretly. The paint-stained dress is a dress of hers; and the fire heard crackling in her room at four in the morning was a fire lit to destroy it. Rosanna Spearman has stolen the Diamond. I'll go in directly, and tell my aunt the turn things have taken."

"Not just yet, if you please, sir," said a melancholy voice behind us.

We both turned about, and found ourselves face to face with Sergeant Cuff.

"Why not just yet?" asked Mr. Franklin.

"Because, sir, if you tell her ladyship, her ladyship will tell Miss Verinder."

"Suppose she does. What then?" Mr. Franklin said those words with a sudden heat and vehemence, as if the Sergeant had mortally offended him.

"Do you think it's wise, sir," said Sergeant Cuff, quietly, "to put such a question as that to me—at such a time as this?"

There was a moment's silence between them: Mr. Franklin walked close up to the Sergeant. The two looked each other straight in the face. Mr. Franklin spoke first; dropping his voice as suddenly as he had raised it.

"I suppose you know, Mr. Cuff," he said, "that you are treading on delicate ground?"

"It isn't the first time, by a good many hundreds, that I find myself treading on delicate ground," answered the other just as immovable as ever.

"I am to understand that you forbid me to tell my aunt what has happened?"

"You are to understand, if you please, sir, that I throw up the case, if you tell Lady Verinder, or tell anybody, what has happened, until I give you leave."

That settled it. Mr. Franklin had no choice but to submit. He turned away in anger—and left us.

I had stood there listening to them, all in a tremble; not knowing whom to suspect, or what to think next. In the midst of my confusion, two things, however, were plain to me. First, that my young lady was, in some unaccountable manner, at the bottom of the sharp speeches that had passed between them. Second, that they thoroughly understood each other, without having previously exchanged a word of explanation on either side.

"Mr. Betteredge," said the Sergeant, "you have done a very foolish thing in my absence. You have done a little detective business on your own account. For the future, perhaps you will be so obliging as to do your detective business along with me.'

He took me by the arm, and walked me away with him along the road by which he had come. I dare say I had deserved his reproof—but I was not going to help him to set traps for Rosanna Spearman, for all that. Thief or no thief, legal or not legal, I don't care—I pitied her.

"What do you want of me?" I asked, shaking him off, and stopping short.

"Only a little information about the country round here," said the Sergeant.

I couldn't well object to improve Sergeant Cuff in his geography.

"Is there any path, in that direction, leading from the sea-beach to this house?" asked the Sergeant. He pointed, as he spoke, to the fir-plantation which led to the Shivering Sand.

"Yes," I said; "there is a path."

"Show it to me."

Side by side, in the grey of the summer evening, Sergeant Cuff and I set forth for the Shivering Sand.

OTHER GENII OF THE CAVE.

We have all heard the story of a sexton who was run away with by goblins; who beheld strange scenes of joy and sorrow, of revelry and mourning, of beauty and of hideousness, in the caverns he was whisked to by his mysterious guides. That sexton's experience is mine. In suddenness of transition, in depth of contrast, and in the sternness of the moral enforced, the pictures shown me by my genii are as those pourtrayed by his. My predecessor's view changed by the mere appearance and disappearance of columns of smoke. The cavern remained the same; while happy domestic life, touching domestic sorrow, peaceful declining years, and the glories of nature, with every leaf and blade animate with life, were revealed in instantaneous succession. In my case, a few weeks intervened between my last cavern-trip* and

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* See Genii of the Cave, page 60.

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this, but they now seem to be obliterated. The shrill whistle and the harsh rumble of wheels overhead tell me I am still in a railway arch, with trains passing to and fro above me; but the handsome decorations, the gilding and carved oak, the monster silver gridiron, the discreetly urbane waiters, the appetising viands, and refreshing drinks have all gone; and, in their place, are windy discomfort, and sordid misery. For a costly flooring of polished marqueterie we have the hard damp earth; for gaily painted walls, bare bricks and mortar; for an ornate and classic entrance, a few boards roughly nailed together and turning on a rude hinge. The two open ends of the arch are partly blocked up by old planks, but the openings are many and large, and the keen January wind rushes through fiercely and pierces to the marrow. This arch gives partial shelter from the rain and snow, but nothing more. All present are working too hard, however, to feel cold, and the deafening noise you hear arises from hundreds of hammers busily employed in breaking granite. The scene has indeed changed. This cave is filled with men who have broken down. We hear of a "temporary pressure" and "unusual distress;" but whole rows of faces have the hopeless beaten look of long-suffering poverty. We are in Bethnal-green. The cave is one of the arches of the Great Eastern Railway, and the genii with us are the committee of the Employment and Relief Association recently organised at the suggestion and by the pecuniary aid of Miss Burdett Coutts. Three arches have been lent by the railway company: two are filled with stone-breakers; the other contains a little office and pay-desk, and is being rapidly utilised for additional workers. Four hundred men are at present employed, the majority of whom are in this and the adjoining arch. The rest are sweeping the muddy streets of the district. Seated closely together in long rows, with an abundant stock of granite at their feet, they plod steadily on, with no little clatter and noise, making the hard stone fly far and wide. Each face is covered by a piece of perforated zinc, which effectually conceals the features while at work; but these are moved or taken off, as if for relief, directly the hammers cease. But, when we first enter, the long rows of punctured metal faces, like so many "roses" of large watering-pots, remind one unpleasantly of those model prisons in which speech is prohibited, and where silent masked figures flit to and fro the visitor's path like forlorn spirits from the nether world. Here, however, the wire or zinc covering is simply a protective measure, and without it cut faces and injured sight would almost certainly result. The poor fellows before us would be starving if it were not for this work. The four hundred here to-day are drawn from the ranks of ordinary East London labour, some skilled, some unskilled, but none able to obtain work; and they were classified, for our satisfaction, with the following result: One hundred and twenty-six were "labourers," including, besides nondescripts, bricklayers, dock-labourers, safe-makers, brass-founders, farmers' men, navvies, and dustmen; forty-one were workers in wood, including carpenters, cabinet-makers, chair and drawer makers, box and trunk makers, toy-makers, chair-coverers, carvers, coopers, steam and ordinary sawyers; twenty-five were decorators, including painters, plumbers, glass-cutters, paperstainers, and japanners; thirteen were workers in metal, including smiths, gun-makers, tinmen, type-founders, and watch-case spring-makers; eleven were skilled bricklayers, plasterers, brick-makers, and pipe-makers; eighty-two were weavers, including silk-dyers and weavers, and braid, rug, and mat makers; eighteen were shoe and boot makers; fifteen were food-suppliers, including costermongers, bakers, butchers, fishmongers, a waiter, and a potman. There were also a chemist's assistant, a chemical worker, two drug-grinders, and a lampblack maker, two stokers, and one engine-driver; twenty-one were carmen and stablemen; two gardeners, three time-keepers, three light porters, two soldiers, and a solicitor's clerk, a commercial, and a railway clerk. The remainder were manufacturers of humble articles and followers of humble trades, of which the variety is too great for generalisation.

One man, for example, is a horsehair curler, another is a willow-cutter, and a third a shell-polisher; and all have now turned stone-breakers or street-sweepers for dear life. They commence work at eight in the morning, and break stones till four in the afternoon, having one hour out for dinner, from twelve to one. For this they receive eighteen-pence at four o'clock. It was first proposed to pay two-pence an hour for the time employed, and an additional sum of fourpence if four bushels, and sixpence if six bushels, of stone were broken in the day. But it was found impossible to carry this out. Checking the quantities would have involved too much time and attention, and the men following sedentary callings, the watch-spring makers and the clerks, would have been at a cruel disadvantage with the hard-handed navvies or bricklayers' labourers. So it was determined to pay a fixed rate per day of one shilling and sixpence for breaking, and one and ninepence for the harder work of wheeling and loading the stone. The money is well earned. Let any one who doubts this journey down to Bethnal-green, and, shouldering a stone-hammer, try his hand for an hour or two with these poor men. There is, however, no forcing a prescribed result out of each; but the foreman or ganger keeps a sharp look-out, and any one seen shirking is first warned and then reported. Should this occur two or three times with the same man, he is quietly told at the pay-place in the afternoon, "We shan't want you any more—you know why," whereupon he hangs his head, and, generally without a remonstrance, skulks sheepishly away. We ask how they find their way here? "They are selected in the first instance

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by members of the association, who know them to have lived three months in Bethnal-green—none other are eligible—and who fill in a printed form of recommendation, which they bring to our labour-superintendent. This form must be signed by a householder in the parish, as well as one of the subcommittee, and is a guarantee that we are giving employment to those who really need it. But, in truth, no beggars or idlers would attempt the work we give them." "But," we urge, "as the labour is so hard, and as the vestry purchases the broken granite from you for road-mending, what becomes of the donations of the charitable when sent to the committee?" The explanation is easy. The cost of the granite and labour is more than the selling price of the granite broken up, and the wages paid—the eighteen-pence a day—have to be made up out of the funds of the association. The difference between disbursement and receipt amounts to from two shillings to two shillings and a penny a ton. "We cannot tell you the exact quantity broken, as the surveyor has not been able to measure it up yet, but we imagine that they break about two hundred to three hundred tons a week. The street-sweepers have special directions to cleanse out all the filthy corners which are to be found in many parts, and for that purpose are supplied with pails and, where needed, disinfectants. During the recent snowfall, they kept the footways of the main thoroughfares clear, which, was a great good. Our outdoor work system is—at eight the men answer their numbers, are 'measured up' in gangs of six; five under care of one, who is distinguished by a numbered badge on arm. The parish is divided, each part being overlooked by a superganger, who visits each gang and reports whether working or idle, points out to them any extra dirty place, and sees that work is done. At twelve all leave for dinner, at one they are called again, answer their numbers; at four they are paid. Then the numbers are consecutively called; the man repeats his name; if right, the check clerk gives a sign, and the labourmaster hands out the day's pay. Unless disturbed by any unpleasantness, three hundred may be thus paid and checked in half an hour."

We are next invited to test some of the commissariat arrangements established in connexion with the Employment and Relief Association; and we leave the arches. We plod through dirty thoroughfares, and by the side of sordid wretched alleys to that substantial oasis of comfort and luxury, Columbia-square. Turning down by the west side of this, we come upon its splendid next door neighbour, Miss Coutts's new market, the beauty and pure architectural taste of which make it one of the most remarkable edifices in London, and are introduced to the manager of the soup kitchen, to at once recognise an old friend. That rosy face, that grey-headed-boy look, that simple earnestness and hearty conviction of manner, are all familiar. The Belgian gentleman, their owner, presided at a dinner I helped to eat some three years ago, and made speeches which were quite Anglican in their length and complication on providing food for the poor, in which art he is an adept. On this occasion a couple of steaming basins of soup soon cleared our comprehension of this peculiar English. These basins held a pint each, and we finished every drop. Could we have it taken away in our own jugs, it would have been served to us at a penny a pint; but as we consumed it "in the coffee-room" with bread, we paid three-halfpence. It was comforting, nourishing, substantial. There was not a touch of "poor soup" about it, and the man who carried a pint of this excellent compound under his waistcoat would not be badly prepared for stone-breaking. Thick and what London boys call "stodgey," it is something between a soup and a stew, and redolent both of vegetables and meat. There was no affectation in the enjoyment either of the genii with me or myself. We finished our basins because we liked them; and not out of any fanciful philanthropy as to doing what others did. Indeed, at this time we were the only people in the room. The regular dinner-hour was past, and the mid-day work over, so our benignant Belgian stood over us and ministered to our wants like some elderly cherub with a genius for cooking.

Not the least pleasing part of the business is that our friend makes it pay. He has kitchens and restaurants in various parts of London, at which you may obtain, from seven in the morning till nine at night, not merely the soup I speak of, but such dishes as spiced beef at a penny a portion, or a suet pudding for the same price, roast meat for sixpence, and boiled and stewed meat, meat puddings or pies for fourpence. I can't pretend to say how this is done. Competent people assure me that our friend's system of accounts is admirable; but, although you certainly may "cook" accounts, you can't well eat them, and this purveyor's things are all savoury and good. Good beef and mutton purchased by himself and paid for in ready money are his staples, and it is by economical management and careful cooking that he contrives to feed people well for a few pence, and to make a comfortable profit for himself. The capital pea-soup we have just consumed is taken down to the stone-breakers at their dinner-hour, and sold to those who like it at a penny a bowl. There is no pretence of charity in this. Our Belgian has the privilege of vending his food at his own price to a collection of customers who are glad enough to buy it, but that is all. Cooking and charity are distinct virtues, and the committee wisely decline to mix them together. But this admirable supply of cheap food can be dealt with on commercial principles, and is abundantly "worked" for charitable purposes as well. Printed books of tickets can be bought by the benevolent either at the depôt in Columbia-market, or at Messrs. Hatchard's, in Piccadilly, and these, if sent to

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the committee, are distributed among the sick and infirm. There cannot surely be a better vehicle for West-end charity than this. If the kind impulsive people whose guineas burn their pockets, and who, on reading the terrible tales of East-end distress, rush into the evils of indiscriminate alms-giving, would buy these books and forward them to the committee, they may rest satisfied that every penny will confer a benefit instead of an injury. If they do this, they provide food for the helpless and the starving. If they send money to the committee, they provide honest work for men willing to labour for their families, but who are thrown out of employment by the bitter exigencies of the time.

The whole of Bethnal-green, with its population of one hundred and twenty thousand souls, is mapped out into thirteen districts, and to each district a sub-committee for relief and employment is appointed. Some of the local shopkeepers, the men whose dealings are almost exclusively with the classes who are out of work, and who know the poor of the district personally, co-operate with the clergymen of the district in selecting from among the crowds of applicants for permission to work, and in the preliminary letter announcing the formation of the society to the clergy of Bethnal-green, it was wisely written, "As this is simply a matter of 'employment and relief,' it is most desirable that the sub-committee should not exclusively consist of members of the Church of England." A large majority of these gentlemen are heartily co-operating with the association, are members of its committee, and are working with some of the leading dissenters of the parish for the common good. A minority of the local clergy stand aloof, one of them actually giving as a reason, "You seem too cold and secular for religion, and you do not appear to need clergy for such a work, or any reference to denominations whatsoever." Is it "cold and secular" to succour the needy, to help the distressed, and to feed the starving? Methinks it is a "secularity" inculcated by the most sacred of books, and a "coldness" practised by the Great Teacher himself. But the association is a deadly foe to begging-letter writing, and to the indiscriminate gathering in and bestowal of alms. The penury of Bethnal-green, and the appeals founded on it which have been successfully made to the benevolent public, have demoralised other people besides the poor. When a sensational advertisement brings in money almost without stint, when the sums subscribed are entrusted bodily to the advertiser, who neither makes nor is expected to make any formal statement of account, and when inquiry is resented as insult, the perfectly open proceedings of this committee, with its measured appeals, its regular book-keeping, and its close checks must seem awkwardly and prudishly business-like. The funds asked for are employed in helping people to help themselves, and in giving food to those for whom work is impossible. The benevolent lady whose name, already mentioned, always recurs in connexion with well-considered beneficence, guaranteed eighteen-pence a day to two hundred and fifty able-bodied men for three months, on the condition that useful labour should be found for them. The Employment and Relief Association carry out and amplify the scheme she originated, and every penny of their funds is disbursed on fixed principles, as we have seen. The people are not only perfectly satisfied, but are eager for work; and the sub-committees have to refuse employment to hundreds seeking it.

It has been proposed to convey some of the able-bodied to counties in which labour is needed, and even to co-operate with the emigration societies in supplying distant colonies with emigrants. This requires more care than the correspondents of newspapers seem to imagine. The want of labour should be proved by irrefragable evidence before a single man is sent away. Several cases have occurred within the writer's knowledge, in which a letter in a newspaper has raised utterly false hopes on the labour question. Not two years ago one of the most eminent firms of railway contractors, in pressing need of workmen, despatched an agent into Cornwall to find they had been hoaxed; and before now men have been sent from Bethnal-green itself to distant parts, to find work as unattainable as ever, and to return disheartened and discomforted to their parish. These are some of the difficulties with which the genii have to contend, difficulties which, if "cold and secular," are also practical and real. But their usefulness, so long as they exact fair work for moderate pay, will only be limited by the means at their disposal. A proposal is afloat to reclaim Hackney Marshes, and to perform other acts of public usefulness, in addition to stone-breaking and street-cleaning.

We have our doubts, however, as to the "temporary" character of the distress. Much of it seems to us fixed and chronic. It is too true, as the out-relief committee of the Bethnal-green guardian board reported the other day—that "as each winter comes round, numbers of able-bodied men, either from want of work, or misfortune, or some unforeseen catastrophe, are obliged to apply for relief," and we really see little hope of the existing distress terminating with the present winter. The utter impossibility of the guardians giving adequate parish relief in places where, to again quote from the parochial report, "the poor are mainly supported by ratepayers who are themselves but one step removed from pauperism," is the great necessity for such an organisation as is provided by the genii. When common sense and common honesty prevail, and the rates of London are equalised, we may hope to leave the grave questions pertaining to relief in properly responsible hands. Till then we must look to voluntary associations to pay the heavy debt our rich metropolitan districts owe to the poor, and it would be difficult to hit upon a better form of "conscience money" than remitting to genii

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who know no incantations but those of common sense, and whose help are purchased by honest work alone.

A FOREIGN CONTRACT.

Experience seems to have no effect upon the hardy and adventurous nature of the British capitalist. His reliance on his shrewdness, his management, his arithmetic, and, in case of necessity, upon his fists are unbounded. Very likely he has succeeded in some dozen public works in England, and netted a good hundred thousand pounds by them.. When the parish trustees at Diddleton-super-Mare, assisted by Lawyer Whitecow, of that town, had a brush with him about building a new workhouse and dependencies, he came off triumphantly, his own solicitors in Thavies Inn, Messrs. Gimblet, Rule, and Pounder, having sued the said trustees for damages, and brought them to their senses in double-quick time. He has a blind reliance on Messrs. Gimblet, Rule, and Pounder ever afterwards, and believes that this eminent firm of solicitors can protect him against all the princes and potentates of the earth. When fully impressed with these opinions, certain that two and two are four—a doctrine he is constantly propounding—he is quite ripe to be plucked by the first foreign rogue who is allured by the freshness and bloom which shine in his frank countenance. When the fish is hooked and landed by a foreigner, the struggles begin. The first thing required of him is to pay the promoters of the proposed scheme, say a railway in Doomania. These he will find so numerous that they will involve him in half a dozen lawsuits at the outset of the affair. Individuals, with whose very names he is unacquainted, yet who appear respectable people not to be pooh-poohed, will file bills in Chancery against him, claiming previous contract rights legally assured to them by the foreign government in question. Messrs. Gimblet, Rule, and Pounder will inform him that his opponents are altogether of a different kidney to Messrs. Burr and Drone with their legal adviser at Diddleton-super-Mare. They have now no less than seventeen firms of eminent London solicitors engaged against them, and all the leading counsel have been retained on the other side. Meantime, the British contractor, true to his multiplication-table, will not hear of giving up a business which has already cost him so much; and, strong in the justice of his cause at first, he rather enjoys the disappointment of his rivals and laughs at them and their Chancery suits together.

All at once, too, he has become a great man. There are paragraphs about his wealth and energy in the City articles of the morning papers. The ambassador of the Doomaniau Principalities refers to him in a flattering manner at a banquet given by the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor in the Egyptian Hall at the Mansion House, where he is held up as an enlightened merchant-prince of large views and liberal principles, who desires to cement the political union of two great countries by the bonds of commerce. He is called upon to return thanks when his health is drunk at various other festive meetings of a similar character, where, under the influence of champagne and good cheer, he takes occasion to relate, for the guidance and instruction of British youth, his biography and the means by which he rose in life to his present proud position. He likes it; so does his wife. Ever since the paragraph appeared in the morning papers, she has been inundated by cards and visits from the most distinguished and affable people. The Doomanian ambassador has vouchsafed even to come in his own illustrious representative person to dinner, and has proposed four of his own nephews, together with a noble uncle and brother-in-law, for employment connected with the new contracts on remunerative terms. Half a dozen native counts and princes have called also, and it is a noticeable fact that every one of the local magnates has got something to sell. One is the proprietor of a forest, another of a stone-quarry, a third has a few thousand peasants to let out on hire. There is no end to the polite offers of service they make also to the contractor's wife. All day long liveried footmen are arriving at Clapham-common with coroneted notes and presents of game, or nosegays for her daughters. Foreign nobility are always so polite, that it is quite a pleasure to correspond with them upon such cordial and familiar terms; besides which, Mary Ann and Jemima may evidently choose whatever title they fancy they should best adorn when shared in company with a foreign gentleman of imposing, not to say bandit-like, exterior.

There is but one slight drawback to these domestic and social blisses. The enterprising man who had such trust in his creed that two and two make four, begins to look rather haggard and careworn when he comes home to Clapham of an evening. He has had to pay a very large amount of caution-money to the government of Doomania as a guarantee for the due performance of his contract and completion of the works he has incautiously undertaken to execute within a given time. He is, of course, such an excellent man of business, and so thoroughly versed in the lessons taught by arithmetic, that he has locked up all his own capital, so that not a shilling of it remains idle. He has had, therefore, to appeal to his bankers to raise the amount of caution-money required, and has tendered them his valuable contract as security.

Strange to say, however, the faith of Messrs. Bullion and Scrip in the resources of Doomania and its rulers is strictly limited. They point out with some abruptness that four princes who have governed that fertile country within the last two years, are now in exile; two of them residing at a coffee-house in Leicester-square, and two in obscure lodgings at Paris; while it appears, according to the banker's account, to be an invariable rule in Doomania for

every statesman who attains to power to repudiate all the acts and obligations of his predecessors. With respect to old Slyboutski, as the banker disrespectfully styles the ambassador, he used to be a smuggler, and dare not go home for fear of being caught by the Russians and hanged for an act of piracy; but he made such a good business of it, that he can always afford to buy up a few notes of hand of the influential men of any new government, and so he is allowed to stay on here. "Still," urges the contractor, "twice two *are* four. Whatever government is in or out, I must be paid. My profits are secured partly by tonnage dues on shipping, which I shall collect myself, partly on the Custom House, and partly guaranteed by three-fourths of the amount required already funded."

"Profits?" repeats the banker, with a sly note of interrogation curled up on his face. So at the close of the interview, Mr. Contractor finds that he will have to unlock some of his capital at a heavy loss, or perhaps to give a mortgage on his Clapham freehold with its new hothouses, stabling, and appurtenances, which he has reared with so much care and cost. All this, however, occasions delay, and as the caution-money had not been deposited upon the day required, a rumour has been industriously circulated that Mr. Contractor is bankrupt; which brings down some rather heavy demands upon him from unexpected quarters, and complicates his affairs not a little. Tracing this mischievous scandal to its source after it has nearly ruined him, he finds that it has been set on foot by an envious native gentleman, who is determined henceforth to devote his whole energies to avenging the disappointment he has experienced in not getting the contract himself. As this native gentlemen is very ably supported by other native gentlemen, he will have to be bought off before worse comes of it.

This is only the beginning of the difficulties which pursue the enterprise commenced in the brave belief that two and two make four. Although the prices named in the contract by the Doomanian government are undoubtedly large, and, as far as the multiplication-table goes, it may be clearly demonstrated that they must yield an immense profit, there are drawbacks. The prices are nearly twice as large as could be obtained for similar work from any public body or government department in England. But Doomania has neither materials nor workmen to use them; so that both will have to be exported from England; and this brings rather a novel element into the business. It will be necessary to buy, or to charter a fleet of steam-ships,; and on the whole it is cheaper to buy than to charter for a lengthened period. This diminishes the prospective profits in a very startling and unexpected manner. Then arise difficulties with the Doomanian Admiralty as to whether vessels under foreign flag can trade upon the Doomanian coast; and the Native Admiralty, with all its secretaries and clerks, have to be bought off before this difficulty can be settled. Meantime, half the workmen who are hired have got frightened at some reports of cholera and revolution in Doomania, and steadily refuse to proceed thither without double wages and a life-insurance. Moreover, the year having closed without the stipulated annual quantity of work being complete, Mr. Contractor has incurred a heavy fine, which can only be compromised by wholesale bribery to one-fourth of the amount, exclusive of several sub-contractors, who claim compensation for the inevitable breach of their engagements brought about by the difficulties raised at the Admiralty. This same thing happens every succeeding year. Every government department invents some ingenious pretext to share in the British contractor's plunder.

The Native Admiralty continue to make themselves expensively felt whenever the steam fleet comes to grief. But the military authorities are in no respect behind them. First they come with offers of labour by troops, which it is as dangerous to accept as to refuse. In either case, there is certain to be a row. Some fellows in uniform coats are sure to complain that they have been thumped or kicked, and the works must be stopped till they are satisfied, or till the enterprising Englishman or his representatives and their whole company have been tried for the offence of assault and battery. This gives the native judges and legal gentlemen an opportunity to get their fingers in the pie, and the native ministers must be also favourably impressed, by pecuniary means, to grant a favourable decision in appeal cases.

There is another notable fact. The contractor was always so firmly persuaded that twice two always made four, that he counted confidently that twice two men could do the work of four men,; and, how much four men ought to do in a given time he supposed he knew beyond all manner of doubt. But he omitted from his calculations the very noteworthy difference between British islanders and the inhabitants of other countries. He has since discovered that none of the foreigners in his employment can be induced to work more than one day in three; the other two being spent between religious ceremonies and getting tipsy. Of fasts, feasts, saints' days, and tipsy days there is no end; and even when the foreign workmen are fairly at work, a dozen of them together are not worth one steady Englishman, and they can never be relied upon at a pinch at all. Sometimes they all strike work and go off together when most wanted, because they have seen some British heathen frying a pork-chop in Lent. Any attempt to bring them back again is met by the local priesthood with ecclesiastical censure. These are all venerable persons, with dirty beards and dirtier long cloth bed-gowns, whom it is extremely imprudent to offend, and who can only be kept quiet by liberal peace-offerings in coin.

A hundred times over Mr. Contractor wishes the Doomanian Principalities and all connected with them at the bottom of the sea; but by this time he has sunk so much money that he is tied hand and foot, and bound to pass

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under the yoke, however grievous. He understands now that nobody but a native can deal successfully with the Doomanians. This ingenious race of people have a way of their own in managing business with their government. It is very simple. They take as much money as they can get, and do as little as they can. When hard pressed, they bring things to a wrangle, which may always last their lifetime with a little adroit management. Instead of giving caution-money themselves in the first instance, they pay some bankrupt householder to stand bail for them, and then obtain advances of money upon promises which they never intend to perform. Thus, one native gentleman made three hundred thousand pounds by obtaining advances over and over again on the same heap of rubbish which he called his materials. His device had all the effective simplicity of true genius. He bribed the necessary local officials, and then calmly had his rubbish wheeled in barrows every night to a different quarter of the town, and obtained an advance upon it next morning. When he had by these means obtained all the available funds at the disposal of the local authorities, he declared himself bankrupt, and retired into the country under efficient Government protection and in general respect, to enjoy his gains. Many a time did this worthy watch Mr. Contractor and his friends with amused wonder while they were trying to get fair work for fair wages, knowing how hopeless it would be; yet he and a score of other native gentlemen would have accepted a similar contract any day, and doubled their fortunes by it.

The fact is that the air of foreign countries does not agree with English men of business, and the less they have to do with them the better. No trade is to be carried on profitably abroad without a great deal of local knowledge, an interminable maze of trick and intrigue surrounding every detail connected with it. The twice two are four doctrine altogether breaks down, and the most exact and careful calculations based on British facts invariably prove faulty and deceptive. If a British contractor endeavours to fall into the ways of the natives and to act unscrupulously in his own dealings, he fares worse than ever. Foreign cheating requires a regular apprenticeship, and is a craft which cannot be successfully followed by a stranger. He will be allowed to try it in order that hush money may be extorted from him; but such demands soon become excessive, and the moment his means fail to gratify the rapacity of any one who has power to injure him, he is exposed and ruined without mercy. He will find himself, however honestly and prudently he desires to act, a mark for constant jealousy, extortion, and oppression under some form or other. If he refuses to employ natives in every post of confidence at his disposal, they will try to injure him; and if he does employ them, they will do him still greater injury by their incapacity and greediness.

It may be as well to lay the lesson here given seriously to heart just now, when so many foreign countries are bidding against each other for British capital and energy. The best possible advice that can be given to any one who contemplates the acceptance of a foreign contract is to renounce the idea at once, and have nothing whatever to do with it. Roumania, Hungary, Turkey, Russia, and the South American States are always ready to take our money and our work; but whatever golden hopes they may hold out, it may be accepted as a rule without exception, that they will be found illusory on trial.

EXTRAORDINARY HORSE-DEALING.

To eat horse-flesh is the first duty of man. To sing the praises of horse-flesh is incumbent upon all. Such is the frame of mind into which some of my friends are rapidly drifting. They think horse, talk horse, dream horse, and are pledged to believe in horse all the days of their gastronomic life. Give them a costly banquet, and they mentally compare its component parts with horse; talk to them of rare delicacies, and they at once refer you to horse; speak to them of starvation and distress, and their panacea is horse; in short, they have actually done what that impulsive person, Richard the Third, offered to do, and have given up their kingdom (of thought and feeling) for horse. The number of horses killed yearly in England for feeding dogs and cats, the number, again, of these which are suffering from no other disease than old age, and the quantity of flesh-meat which would be thrown upon the market, if this horse-eating creed extends, are subjects to which they give much labour and thought.

Ever since I dined with the twenty-one philosophers who met in privacy to eat horse systematically and scientifically for the first time in England, I too have been looking up facts and figures relating to its consumption. The made dishes on that occasion were exquisitely good. Since then, and with the sweet and pleasant flavour of horse-flesh lingering on my palate, I have sometimes wondered how much of it I have eaten unconsciously in England and abroad. Those amiable Paris restaurant-keepers, who provide six courses and a pint of wine for a couple of francs, are they unacquainted with the succulent merits of horse? Is German sausage free? Are polonies pure? Can à la mode beef lay its hand upon its heart and say, Avaunt! I know thee not? That horse-meat is a common but unacknowledged, more or less, article of food in England, just as it has been for the last fifteen years more or less common and acknowledged in Paris, Austria, Russia, Prussia, Saxony, Belgium, Würtemberg, Denmark, and the Hanse Towns. They say it must be so, and ask, "Where else do the horses go to? My hippophagical friends assert it must be so. They say, where else do the horses go to? Not all to the domestic dogs and cats, to the wild beasts, or to the hounds. The number killed in London alone are, we are assured, more than can be accounted

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for in that way, so we present our credentials at the great horse-slaughtering establishment at Belle Isle, King's-cross, with a belief that we are about to see how a portion of the food of London is supplied.

In the course of one of the most curious investigations it has been our fortune to pursue, we learn that an average of one hundred and seventy horses are killed every week here, and that their flesh is boiled and sold for cats' meat. Their feet are made into glue, the hoof part into Prussian blue; their fat into the oil used for greasing sacks and cart-harness; their blood makes a dye for calico-printers; their hides are converted into leather for the best "uppers;" their bones form excellent manure; and their tails cover chairs and sofas. Now, as the flesh of a horse is said to weigh about three hundred pounds, the foregoing figures give about fifty-one thousand pounds weight of meat to be disposed of every week by this establishment alone. About eight horses a week, or two thousand four hundred pounds, go to the Zoological Gardens, and a ton is sent out in each of the trade carts of the establishment, and sold to dealers. The residue is delivered on the premises to cats'-meat vendors, who come from all parts of London to buy it. What these people are like, and how this branch of the business is conducted, must be left for a future paper—that some of them drive prize-trotting ponies to carry the cats' meat away, for which a hundred guineas have been refused—that fifteen thousand pounds is spoken of as the fortune of one of them—and that their calling is, as was remarked to us, "a brisk, ready-money trade, for which their ain't no credit, for who'd run tick for a ha'porth of cats'-meat?" are the chief facts we master concerning them in our two first visits. We spend an afternoon at Belle Isle, and go through the slaughter-houses and yards, to find all scrupulously clean. A few well-picked skeletons, the ribs and backbone of which look bleached and white, as they rest by the wall, are indeed the only trade symbols we see. There is nothing unpleasant. From eighty to a hundred horses are waiting to be killed, but they are in a clean farm-yard, with abundant straw, and stand in long rows at the manger of a covered shed, where they are munching hay with not a thought of their imminent doom.

It is on a subsequent evening that we are made thoroughly free of the place. I don't quite remember now what I expected beforehand, but I know I found as pleasant and snugly convivial a little party as I have ever had the luck to spend an evening with. The horse-slaughtering chiefs are of a highly social turn, and express all sorts of warm-hearted regrets that we are compelled to keep to the business of the hour. If we will sup, we shan't have horse-meat, they promise us, but something comforting. It was a cold boisterous night, and Belle Isle is behind King's-cross station, at a distance of about a mile. A comfortless, dirty, dreary road, the one by which Dick Turpin galloped on Black Bess in his great ride to York. No shops, few wayfarers, little lig A monotonous blank wall and iron palisa one side, shutting out the railway and th of potato warehouses; irregular shops and ings on the other, without symmetry, c ness, or, at this hour, signs of life. chimneys, with tops in a blaze, peer out of the blank darkness behind the ra wall, as if to say, "*We're* Gas—and sham have our shareholders been treated b Cardwell." Here and there a stray dog solitary policeman, but a general sense of liness withal, which was oppressive. Th fog lowers upon, and seems to close i road; but we pound away through the darkness, with little to break the heavy of our cab-wheels crash through the mud, passing under a railway-bridge, we re small tavern and a smaller office adj There is no direct connexion between th but one of the little knot of loungers c first eyes us interrogatively, and then, v wink and a silent jerk of the thumb over h shoulder, precedes us into the counting-h We step from darkness into light, from c warmth, and from dreariness to comfort.

Pushing through an outer room, wh handsomely decorated with petrified mall tions, and weighty excrescences found bodies of departed steeds, decorated, too the skull of a donkey said to have been by the Prince of Wales, and with spirited traits of celebrated trotters winning their matches, and looking as if they liked it, a are in a cosy back parlour, in which so reigns supreme. A stout cheery yeoman ing man, like a gentleman-farmer, gras warmly by the hand and bids us welcome. is the managing partner of the horse-slau ing firm, who has invited friends learned art to meet us. We form quite a co council on horse-killing. The great slaugh the "Jack" whose name is familiar to ever man and costermonger in London, is, we no more. The gentlemen before us are hi cessors, and are incomparably the larges fessional horse-slayers in the kingdom.

"Do we ever find good and sound among those sent to be killed?" replie stout gentleman to one of our ques "There's not a doubt of it. Do we ever c them up and turn 'em out fresh and well? N it's forbidden by Act of Parliament. horse that come in here must be killed v three days, and we're bound to supply 'em proper food and attention while they're wi But even if we wern't bound it wou cheaper to feed them than to starve them know—that stands to reason—don't we the meat by the pound? We're obliged to enter full particulars of each horse book kept for the purpose, and to hav inspector present at killing-time to see all's square and proper. Who obliges us? Act; and I'd like you to understand the l this business before we show you anything Parliament has legislated upon horse-slaug ing three different times—in 1786, in 1844

in 1849. Now, I'll just read you," pulling out a rather dirty pamphlet, which turned out to be the Acts stitched together, "some bits which will show you how we're governed. 'Whereas,' the first Act says, 'the practice of stealing horses, cows, and other cattle hath of late years increased to an alarming degree, and hath been greatly facilitated by certain persons of low condition, who keep houses or places for the purpose of slaughtering horses and other cattle: for remedy whereof be it enacted by the king's most excellent majesty . . . no person or persons shall keep or use any house or place for the purpose of slaughtering any horse, mare, gelding, colt, filly, ass, or mule, *which shall not be killed for butcher's meat* (we started at these words, for it seems as if George the Third's parliament had been endowed with prophesy), without first taking out a license for that purpose.' Then come regulations as to how we're to obtain our license, the times of slaughtering, the notice we have to give to the inspector (you'll see him presently), the accounts to be kept by the owners of slaughtering-houses, and the form of conviction for violating the Act. The inspector must have notice, mind you, whenever a horse or other animal is to be killed, is to 'take a full account and description' of each, is to look through our books, and has sixpence for every animal we kill. Our inspector's house is in our slaughter-yard, so that we make him responsible for the horses destroyed.

"If the inspector says this Act 'has reason to believe' that any of the horses are in 'a sound and serviceable state,' or if he thinks they have been stolen or unlawfully come by, he is to prohibit the slaughtering for eight days, and to cause 'an advertisement or advertisements to be inserted in the Daily Advertiser or some other public newspaper.' Persons slaughtering horses without a license are, the Act says, to be guilty of felony; and any one destroying the hides of the horses they slay 'by throwing them into lime-pits, or otherwise immersing in or rubbing the same with lime or other corrosive matter,' are guilty of a misdemeanour. That, you'll understand, was aimed at the horse-stealers. Lending a house, barn, or stable not duly licensed for slaughtering purposes is to be punished by a fine of not less than ten nor more than twenty pounds. Then comes a clause exempting the curriers who 'shall kill any distempered or aged horse;' and a passage enforcing some other fines winds up the bill, which remained unaltered for nearly sixty years. The next Act affecting this trade in 1849, 'to amend the law for regulating places for slaughtering-houses,' and it inflicts penalties upon any one cruelly beating or ill-treating a horse about to be killed; and makes the slaughter-house keeper's licence annual. The justices in quarter-sessions can cancel any man's licence on convicting him of violating the Act; and the duty of the inspector, and penalties for neglect on his part, and for obstruction on the part of others, are stringently put forward. These two Acts govern horse-slaughtering now; but I keep the bill passed for the prevention of cruelty to animals here with them, because it relates to us too. It provides that all horses impounded for slaying shall be properly supplied with food; and if kept for twelve hours without a sufficient quantity of 'fit and wholesome food and water,' the keeper of the slaughter-house is fined five pounds. It also provides 'that the hair from the neck of such horse' shall be cut off before slaughtering. No man can be a horse-slaughterer and a horse-dealer at the same time, and all headboroughs, parish beadles, peace-officers, special constables, and members of the Metropolitan or City of London police, as well as county constabulary, have the right of inspecting our places, if in their districts, almost when they like.

"There, Mr. All The Year Round, I think you've got pretty well hold of the laws we're bound to obey. We conduct our business strictly by them, and horses are sent here under all sorts of circumstances. Being worn out or diseased is the commonest reason, of course; but sometimes it's whim or fancy that sends 'em to us. A gentleman will die, perhaps, and leave instructions in his will that his favourite pony isn't to be let grow old to run the risk of being badly treated; or a fine frisky animal has run away with a little girl or boy, and been the means of breaking an arm or a leg; or some incurably vicious beast has been the death of a relative or friend; all these are reasons for having sound horses killed. We've nothing to do with anything of that sort here. A horse once in at that gate—excepting those we use in our own business—and he never goes out again except as cats' meat. We just poleaxe 'em, that's all. Our foreman, Potler, is the cleverest man in Europe at that work, and we pay him the salary of three curates for knocking horses on the head. Not that he does it much himself, he goes out with the cart and sells, but he *can* do it, you know, better than any one living, and he's thoroughly sober and trustworthy, and looks well after the men. He was here long before we were, and knows the whole business, root and branch. He's a good deal respected by gentlemen, and the people we deal with, too, and is a great swell. Why, bless your soul, sir, I've seen that man knock horses down with a hundred pounds worth of diamonds on his fingers and about his neck; and he's quite a character on the turf, makes up his little book on every big race, and manages to win money. I was only saying to him the other day, after he'd killed and 'stripped' his horse like a regular artist, as he is—for there's as much difference, mind you, between one man's touch and another's at horse-killing as at anything else—I was only saying to him, 'Why there's many a gentleman who's been to Oxford *and* Cambridge, and with a first-rate Latin education, who doesn't do as well as you do, Potler, and couldn't earn your salary to save his life.' And he said very fairly that he'd been doing this one thing ever since he was a little child, and it was only natural he could do it better than any one else. But I'll tell you what he can do, and then you may

judge whether he isn't a wonder. He can turn a live horse into a clean-picked skeleton in five-and-twenty minutes—Greenwich time"—the last two words were added as clinchers settling the wonder qualification off-hand. "An hour is considered pretty quick work for any one but him; but he's such a clever workman, that a horse is dead, and skinned, and cut up, I give you my word, before you've done speculating when he's going to begin. He is in the yard outside; now I told him to keep about to-night, as I'd got some gentlemen coming. You've only to come into the yard to see as many horses killed as you like." The donkey's skull and the petrified diseases force themselves upon us stonily as we pass from the jolly sanctum to the office, and from the office to the yard; and the high-stepping animals still trotting on its walls seem to say, 'We, too, were knocked on the head by the artistic Potler.'"

A good-looking, muscular young fellow, with a heavy, fair moustache and "mutton-chop" whiskers; a young man with a keen bright eye and a brisk manner, and who, in point of attire, looked as if he had stepped bodily out of some tailor's fashion-book, lifted his low-crowned hat courteously as we passed into the yard. A huge coin, like the top of a gold shaving-pot, dangled from his watch-chain, and precious stones glistened upon his cravat, and wrists, and hands. This was the expert. He stood between a string of living horses and a large heap of dead ones—a conqueror upon his own battle-field. His little army of slaughterers, in their white canvas uniforms, were busily carving and cutting in the large slaughter-house to the left. Gracefully directing our attention to their doings, our new friend then proceeded to confirm what we have already heard. He is evidently proud of his professional achievements, though exercising a certain gentlemanly reserve when speaking of himself. "Twenty-five minutes from first to last is the quickest time a horse was ever killed and stripped in by mortal man, and there's no one can't do that but me" is his answer to our first question. "Stripping," we are reminded, means clearing every atom of flesh from the bone, disposing of it in boilers and elsewhere, and leaving the horse's skeleton clean and bare. "Let the gentlemen see you settle a few yourself, Potler, and we'll reckon how long it takes you to do it," is the signal for four horses to be led in. Their halters are fastened to a beam above, and they stand patiently side by side waiting Mr. Potler's pleasure. That gentleman hands his blue cloth reefing-jacket to one of his slaughterers-in-waiting, and stands in shirt-sleeves poising a poleaxe in front of his first victim. The attendants have covered its eyes and face with a piece of stiff oil-cloth, which delves in at the top of the forehead so as to make a bull's-eye.

After a couple of feints, apparently to show his consummate mastery over his weapon, the sharp end of the poleaxe descends with a mighty blow and the horse falls—dead. There is no intermediate suffering. The animal rolls over upon its back simultaneously with the crashing sound of the pointed axe through its skull. A single quiver of the four legs as they fall heavily into position, and the assistant-slaughterers are peeling his hide off and cutting him up. There is absolutely no transition between life and death, and the entire operation is decent, decorous, and orderly. In far less time than it has occupied to write these words the next horse in rotation has been blindfolded and poleaxed in his turn—the same formal preliminaries, the feints and poisings, having been gone through. The four horses are killed off in less than three minutes from their being led into the slaughter-house; and as we turn away, we see the first animal stretched out on his back, his four hoofs tied to hooks from the ceiling, and three busy figures in canvas peeling him as methodically and naturally as if he were an orange. The building in which this scene takes place is perfectly clean, and Mr. Potler returns to us without a speck apparent upon his boots, or clothes, or hands. Stepping easily forward, and resting on the handle of his poleaxe as he talks, much as I've seen cricketers after a long score, he again tells us, with dignified modesty, that he attributes his proud position, not so much to natural gifts, as to long and early practice, and to having given the whole of his mind to the subject ever since he can remember. He leaves the "stripping" to his subordinates to-night, and contents himself with what we have seen.

Such was the information I gained on that occasion. I had ascertained that London consumes its own horse-flesh, and that packs of hounds and country cats and dogs are fed on horses locally killed. One of the largest coal-owners in the country assured me that, out of the number of horses employed at and down his pit, an average of six or seven are killed and wasted every week; while other friends declare horse-eating to be useless, on account of the limited supply existing in the country. My friends say it is commonly eaten now. But the subject is too delicate to broach just now, so my evening there closes for the present.

SOUND.

Dr. Tyndall's Heat was a great as well as an agreeable surprise. A book of science could be interesting! The material objects brought into play turned out very curious bodies indeed, with strongly marked individual character, and often appearing under singular disguises. There was no want of sensational incidents. The story, too, had a plot and a regular dénouement—the stripping heat of its pretensions to rank as an entity, and the reducing it to a mere mode of motion—worked out as carefully as the best constructed drama.

Sound, lately given to us by the same great master, is even more familiar in its illustrative details. One characteristic of Dr. Tyndall's books is, that they set you thinking before you have finished a couple of pages; their very no-

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velty and interest stops you, and prevents your going on. Like the trees, seen for the first time by the travellers from St. Kilda, their beautiful leaves and branches pull you back to contemplate them, when you would otherwise be advancing along your road. To his other accomplishments Dr. Tyndall adds the great advantages of foreign travel. As in Heat, he clears up a doubt or establishes a fact by experience obtained in distant lands. Thus, falling snow has often been referred to, as offering a great hindrance to the passage of sound; but it appears to be less obstructive than is usually supposed. Sound seems to make its way freely between the falling flakes. On the 29th of December, 1859, Dr. Tyndall traced a line across the Mer de Glace of Chamouni, at an elevation of nearly seven thousand feet above the sea. The glacier there is half a mile wide, and during the setting out of the line snow fell heavily. He has never seen the atmosphere in England so thickly laden. Still he was able to see through the storm quite across the glacier, and also to make his voice heard. When close to the opposite side, one of the assistants chanced to impede his view. The professor called out to him to stand aside, and he did so immediately. At the end of the line the men shouted, "We have finished," and their voices were distinctly heard through the half-mile of falling snow.

In the lecture-room Dr. Tyndall is as bold and adventurous as he has proved himself upon the mountain. The motion of sound, we are informed, like all other motion, is enfeebled by its transference from a light body to a heavy one—and this is illustrated by the action of hydrogen gas upon the voice. The voice is formed by urging air from the lungs through an organ called the larynx. In its passage it is thrown into vibration by the vocal chords, which thus generate sound. "But when I fill my lungs with hydrogen," says the professor, "and endeavour to speak, the vocal chords impart their motion to the hydrogen, which transfers it to the outer air. By this transference from a light gas to a heavy one, the sound is weakened in a remarkable degree. The consequence is very curious." You have already formed a notion of the strength and quality of my voice. I now empty my lungs of air, and inflate them with hydrogen from this gasholder. I try to speak vigorously; but my voice has lost wonderfully in power, and changed wonderfully in quality. You hear it, hollow, harsh, and unearthly: I cannot otherwise describe it."

MOTION appears to be the basis of all sensation, and consequently of all consciousness of life. *What* the nerves convey to the brain, we have the strongest reason for believing, is in all cases motion. Motion communicated to the ear by any cause, and imparted to the auditory nerve, or the nerve of hearing, is translated by the brain into the sensation of sound. According to this idea, all that goes on *outside of* ourselves is reducible to pure mechanics; if we hear one sound louder than another, it is because our nerves are hit harder in the one case than in the other.

The motion transmitted by the nerves to the brain is not meant the motion of each nerve as a whole, but the vibration or tremor of its molecules, or smallest particles. What we call silence is, therefore, the absence of all vibratory motion in the air, and, consequently, of any corresponding pulse in our auditory nerve. The rapidity with which an impression is transmitted through the nerves, as first determined by Helmholz, and confirmed by Du Bois Raymond, is ninety-three feet in a second. A giant, therefore, say one hundred feet high, would not feel a thorn in his foot until one second after it had pricked him. Were you to put salt on the tail of a sea-serpent eighteen hundred and sixty yards long, it would not be aware of your familiarity until a whole minute afterwards.

In air at the temperature of freezing water, the vibratory pulse which constitutes sound travels at the rate of one thousand and ninety feet a second. Again, and as in the case of the nerves, the motion of the pulse of air must not be confounded with the motion of the particles of air which at any moment constitute the pulse. For while the wave moves forward through considerable distances, each particular particle of air makes only a small excursion to and fro.

That sound is really the consequence of waves in the air, or, in other words, that air is necessary to the propagation of sound, is proved by causing a bell to ring in a vacuum, that is, under the exhausted receiver of an air-pump. When the air is gone, the sound of the bell ceases to be heard. Dr. Tyndall renders the experiment still more striking by *first* exhausting the receiver of its atmospheric air as far as possible, and then allowing hydrogen gas, which is fourteen times lighter than air, to enter the vessel. The sound of the bell is not sensibly augmented by the presence of this attenuated gas, even when the receiver is full of it. By again working the pump, the atmosphere surrounding the bell is rendered still more attenuated, and a vacuum much more perfect than the previous one is obtained. This is of great importance, for it is the getting rid of the last traces of air which chiefly cause the experiment to be so extremely effective. However hard the hammer may pound the bell, no sound will now be heard. An ear placed close to the exhausted receiver is unable to perceive the faintest tinkle. Note that the bell must be suspended by strings; for if it were allowed to rest upon the plate of the air-pump, the vibrations would communicate themselves to the plate, and be transmitted to the air outside.

On permitting air gradually to re-enter the jar, a feeble sound is immediately heard, which grows louder as the air becomes more dense, until the ringing of the bell is again distinctly heard.

At great elevations in the atmosphere (where the air is much rarer) sound is sensibly diminished in loudness. De Saussure thought the explosion of a pistol at the summit of Mont Blanc to be about equal to that of a common cracker below. Dr. Tyndall has several times repeated the experiment. What struck him was the absence of that density and sharpness

in the sound which characterise it at lower elevations. The pistol-shot resembled the explosion of a champagne-bottle, but it was still loud. The withdrawal of half an atmosphere does not very materially affect a ringing bell, and air of the density found at the top of Mont Blanc is still capable of powerfully affecting the auditory nerve. That highly attenuated air is able to convey sound of great intensity is forcibly illustrated by the explosion of mateorites at great elevations above the earth. Here, however, the initial disturbance must be exceedingly violent.

It is clear, then, beyond a doubt that sound is conveyed from particle to particle through the air. The particles which fill the cavity of the ear are finally driven against the tympanic membrane, which is stretched across the passage leading to the brain. This membrane, which closes the "drum" of the ear, is thrown into vibration, its motion is transmitted to the ends of the auditory nerve, and afterwards along the nerve to the brain, where the vibrations are received as sound. How it is that the motion of the nervous matter can thus excite the consciousness of sound is a mystery which we cannot fathom.

The fact that sound is caused by waves or undulations in the air, while light and radiant heat are the result of undulations in the luminiferous ether, gives rise to frequent analogies and correspondences between the phenomena presented by each. Thus both are propagated *in time;* that is, neither are instantaneous. It takes time for the light of a star to reach us, as it takes time for the noise of a lightning-flash to make itself heard as a thunder-clap. The difference of their speed does not affect their mutual relations and resemblances, although light travels nearly two hundred thousand miles while sound is traversing one thousand and ninety feet.

Light and radiant heat, like sound, are wave motions. Like sound, they diffuse themselves in open space, diminishing in intensity according to the same law. Like sound also, light and radiant heat, when sent through a tube with a reflecting interior surface, may be conveyed to great distances with comparatively little loss. The celebrated French philosopher, Biot, observed the transmission of sound through the empty water-pipes of Paris, and found that he could hold a conversation in a low voice through an iron tube three thousand one hundred and twenty feet in length. The lowest possible whisper, indeed, could be heard at this distance, while the firing of a pistol at one end of the tube quenched a lighted candle at the other.

As light may be extinguished by light, so sound may be destroyed by sound. But, to confine ourselves to simpler phenomena, every experiment on the reflection of light has its analogue in the reflection of sound. We put parabolic reflectors behind our lighthouse lamps, to throw their rays to a greater distance. It is recorded that a bell placed on an eminence in Heligoland failed, on account of its distance, to be heard in the town. A parabolic reflector placed behind the bell so as to reflect the sound-waves in the direction of the long sloping street, caused the strokes of the bell to be distinctly heard at all times.

Curved roofs, ceilings, and walls act as mirrors upon sound. In Dr. Tyndall's laboratory, the singing of a kettle seems, in certain positions, to come, not from the fire on which it is placed, but from the ceiling. The acoustic properties of buildings, depending on their mode of construction, vary greatly; success seems often to have been left to chance. In some you hear admirably in every part; of this the late Queen's Theatre was a remarkable instance. In others you hear imperfectly throughout, or are stunned and bewildered with reverberated sounds at certain points. Some public buildings, in which intelligible speech is impossible when empty, allow distinct utterance to be heard when full. An assembled audience, like the furniture of a large room, damps the confused reflexion of sounds from voices or musical instruments—an additional reason for theatrical managers liking to see full houses. Handel, therefore, was more of a stoic than a natural philosopher when he consoled himself for empty benches by saying, "We shall hear de moosick all de petter."

If, instead of a confused reflexion of sounds from short distances, as occurs in large unfurnished rooms, there exists a sufficient *interval* between a direct and a reflected sound, we hear the latter as an *echo*. It is the interval, the distinct repetition, which constitutes the veritable echo. As the reflected sound moves with the same velocity as the direct sound, in air at the temperature of thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit, the echo of a pistol-shot from the face of a cliff distant one thousand and ninety feet is heard two seconds after the explosion. The singular effects of natural echoes have given rise to sundry legends, pleasantries, and imitations. In bygone ages, Echo was a nymph who pined away for love until nothing remained of her except her voice. The famous Irish echo was so perfect, that if you asked it "How do you do?" it replied, "Very well, I thank you." A French actor vaunted the echo at his country box—an echo whom he had formed by careful training. When the rehearsals promised a satisfactory result, he invited a party to hear the phenomenon. Leading his friends to the magic spot in the garden, he shouted, "Are you ready, Echo?" to which, instead of "Ready, Echo?" the stupid answer was "Yes; you may begin as soon as you please."

Sound, like light, may be reflected *several* times in succession; and as the reflected light under these circumstances becomes gradually feebler to the eye, so the successive echoes become gradually feebler to the ear. In mountainous districts, this repetition and decay of sound produces effects unimaginable by dwellers on the plain. Childe Harold's description of the thunderstorm amongst the Alps will recur to every reader. The writer will never forget the long-continued reverberations of cannon fired on a steam-boat in the Lake of Lugano. In Switzerland generally the wonderful echoes form part of the stock-in-trade of that attractive

country. At home, one of our most popular lions is the whispering-gallery of St. Paul's Cathedral. At Carisbrook Castle, in the Isle of Wight, is a well two hundred and ten feet deep, and twelve wide. The interior is lined by smooth masonry. When a pin is dropped into the well, it is distinctly heard to strike the water. Moreover, shouting or coughing into this well produces a resonant ring of some duration.

Amongst the things not generally known, Dr. Tyndall informs us that sound still further resembles light, in being susceptible of refraction. The refraction of a luminous beam by a lens is a consequence of the retardation suffered by the light in passing through the glass. Sound may be similarly refracted by causing it to pass through a lens which retards its motion. Such a lens is formed when we fill a thin balloon with some gas heavier than air. As an example, the professor takes a collodion balloon filled with carbonic acid gas, the envelope being so thin as to yield readily to the pulses which strike against it, transmitting them to the gas inside. He then hangs up his watch, close to the lens; and then, at a distance of four or five feet on the other side of the lens, he listens, assisting his ear with a glass funnel, which acts as an ear-trumpet. By moving his head about he soon discovers a position in which the ticking of the watch is particularly loud. This, in fact, is the focus of the lens. If he moves his ear away from this focus, the intensity of the sound decreases. If, when his ear is at the focus, the balloon be removed, the ticks are enfeebled; on replacing the balloon, their force is restored. The lens enables him to hear the ticks distinctly when they are perfectly inaudible to the unaided ear. The sound-lens magnifies small sounds, as the glass lens magnifies minute objects. Thin india-rubber balloons form excellent sound-lenses.

The moderate speed of sound in air is the cause of a number of curious facts which ignorant people might take for contradictions. For instance, if a row of soldiers form a circle and discharge their pieces all at the same time, the sound will be heard as a single discharge by a person occupying the centre of the circle. But if the men form a straight row, and if the observer stand at one end of the row, the simultaneous discharge of the men's pieces will be prolonged to a kind of roar. A company of soldiers marching to music along a road, cannot march in time together; for the notes do not reach those in front and those behind simultaneously.

The velocity of sound in water is more than four times its velocity in air. The velocity of sound in iron is seventeen times its velocity in air. The difference of velocity in iron and in air may be illustrated by the following instructive experiment: Choose one of the longest horizontal bars employed for fencing in Hyde Park, and let an assistant strike the bar at one end, while the ear of the observer is held close to the bar at a considerable distance. *Two* sounds will reach the ear in succession; the first being transmitted through the iron, and the second through the air. This effect was observed by M. Biot, in his experiments on the iron water-pipes of Paris.

Dr. Tyndall's book on Sound contains eight lectures, all full of novel and instructive matter, to which the student is progressively initiated. Even by persons of considerable acquirements this volume cannot be swallowed as a literary syllabub. But by devoting two days to the perusal of each lecture, and twelve more days to their re-perusal and to getting them up, what an advance in knowledge is made in a month, and what a stock of information is laid in for the rest of one's life! It is impossible here to give more than a hint of the things not merely told, but clearly proved; of sound made visible; of velocities of sound and sound-waves measured so simply as to make you wonder you did not think of it yourself; of harmonics and their cause demonstrated to *the eye*, and their formation rendered as plain to the sight as their tone is easily recognised by the ear; of reed-pipes, the organ of voice, and vowel sounds. In Dr. Tyndall's hands everything is vocal. Flames sing; burning gas distinguishes harmony from dissonance; water-jets are sensible of musical sounds; and, in point of delicacy, a liquid vein may compete with the ear.

MAJOR MILLIGAN'S MISTAKE.

"MISTAKE! my dear sir," said the major, "faith! it's no mistake at all, at all. No, no, divil a bit of mistake in it; but I'll jist go and settle it for you. Wait here a bit till I come back."

"But, major," I exclaimed, trying to detain him, "you must tell me what course you mean to take."

He put aside my hand, and was gone in a moment, in spite of my attempts to stop him.

"Confound it!" I muttered; "am I never to get this affair explained? Here this Spaniard comes mixing up French and Spanish in such a way that I can't understand what he means, except that it is pistols and coffee for two; and when I tell the major that I have got into a quarrel, without knowing how, and that I think there's some mistake, he won't listen to a word I have to say, but goes off to settle it without knowing what it is. Well, I suppose I must wait here till he returns, or I get a message from the Spaniard."

With these words half aloud to myself, I turned to the window of the refreshment room, into which I had lounged from my place in the theatre. It was full moon, and everything in the streets of Caracas was as visible as at noonday. I gazed for a long time, and was beginning to think of going away, when I saw a company of soldiers turn the corner of the street, and advance to the entrance of the theatre.

"Rather an unusual number of men for relieving a sentry," said I to myself; "what can they want?"

The soldiers ascended the steps and halted in

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the lobby. Their officer in command entered the box from which I had just issued, and the door of which faced the open door of the saloon where I was. He returned immediately, with a tall dark man who had been sitting near me, and who I knew was the minister of war. The soldiers advanced; the minister of war was placed between their files and marched off to prison.

"Egad!" thought I, "this is a pleasant country, where one goes from the opera to prison:—or is this, perhaps, another mistake?"

I was still, as orientals say, biting the finger of surprise at the arrest I had just witnessed, when back came the major. With him was the handsome young Spaniard, who had accused me of saying something which was not polite. He was looking quite satisfied now; but his right arm was in a sling, a circumstance I certainly had not observed when he spoke to me before. His face wore a bland smile, however, and, taking off his hat with his left hand, he said:

"Monsieur, I learn there has been a mistake. It appears that I deceived myself. Monsieur had no intention——"

"Monsieur, said I, interrupting him, "I could have had no intention of doing or saying anything disagreeable to a gentleman who is, I believe, an entire stranger to me."

Thereupon the Spaniard bowed, and replaced his hat. We both then bowed, and he withdrew, with the air of one who had had a most gratifying interview.

"There's the end of the affair, I suppose," said I to the major; "and now it's over, I hope, as you seem to know, you will tell me what the deuce it is all about."

"Well, you see," said the major, "I heard it all from a friend, before I met you in the refreshment room. When you crossed over to the box where Iñez was sitting, Enriquez—that's the Spaniard's name—followed you. He won't let any one have a tête-à-tête with Iñez, you know. Well, he asked you how you liked Venezuela, and you said—I forget what you said; but I know I have had a man out for less."

"But, since Enriquez is a Spaniard, what did it matter to him what I thought about Venezuela? It must be a mistake, after all."

"No, faith!" cried the major, impatiently; "it is true enough. But I know you didn't mane to offend Enriquez, and so I told him, or you wouldn't have forgotten all about it. But he said you did mane it, so I told him I'd prove it to him you didn't, if he'd step across the street to the house of a friend where we could find a couple of rapiers and some one to see fair play. We went, and at the first pass I ran him through the sword-arm, and then we tied up his arm, and I said, as he couldn't fight any more, he'd better come and make it up with you; and so he did, and that's all about it. And here we are at my quarters, so come along; and mind the dog, or you'll find him mighty playful with the calves of your legs as you mount the staircase."

Paying due regard to the major's caution, I managed with my cane to keep off the attentions of a stout terrier who followed us into the smoking-room, and then seeing me take my seat like an honest man, ceased to snuff at imaginary rascals in my legs, and bestowed himself under the table.

Meantime his master had taken a pipe and filled it carefully with some of that cave tobacco which is the boast of Venezuela, sold in boxes. For a man who had just been engaged in a duel, the major's countenance wore a most serene expression. But the exceeding calmness of his look was one of his characteristics, and it never altered under any circumstances. Another peculiarity of his was the mellifluous tone of his voice, which remained unchanged even when he chose to utter, as he sometimes did, most despiteful words. Snow-white hair, too, added to his peaceful appearance; but he was a man of iron build, with the chest, shoulders, and arms of a gladiator, and a complexion of bronze. He was a renowned duellist, and had been out with every kind of weapon, and so very often, that he sometimes confused the incidents of his encounters, and would shake his head and heave a regretful sigh after speaking of a man whose affair had ended in a miss and a shot in the air, while in another case, in which his antagonist had been mortally wounded, he would close his reminiscences with a smile and a joyous "Faith, sir, I'm glad it ended as it did!"

"Now, major," said I, "for the story you promised me. In your case there was a mistake, I suppose."

"You may say that," responded the major, settling himself in his easy chair, and opening correspondence with a fragant glass of rum and water which he had just mixed for himself. "A mistake there was, and so I tould O'Halloran, but he wouldn't believe it, worse luck to him, poor fellow.

"It was a very long time ago; let me see now, yes, faith, as long back as April, 1821, that I landed at Angostura—Ciudad Bolivar they call it now—to join the British Legion under the liberator: that's Bolivar, you know. I was a smart boy then, with fair hair and rosy cheeks, just come from serving in one of the Duke's crack regiments, full of life, and ready for anything, from a fight to a fandango, from stealing a kiss to taking a battery. There were many like me on board the ship that brought us over from Europe, but all our high spirits could not make our first impression of the country, we had come to free, an agreeable one. The northern coast of Venezuela woos the voyager to land with many a glorious bit of scenery, but Guyana, at whose capital we were about to disembark, is anything but inviting. A swampy forest as big as France and Spain put together, with a huge muddy drain running through the middle of it, that's Guyana and the Orinoco. Yet Raleigh cruised about in search of palaces of gold in this vast howling wilderness, full of snakes, jaguars, and alligators, with a sprinkling of wretched human savages who think ant-paste a luxury. 'Pat, my boy,' I said to a friend,

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who, like myself, was leaning over the bulwarks looking at the town, 'what think ye of El Dorado?' 'Faith, I think,' said he, 'that its only virtue is that it tells the truth; for it says, as plain as can be, that Yellow Jack is always in command of the garrison here, and that he'll give half of us permanent quarters on the ground-floor.'

"With this pleasant prophecy ringing in my ear, I landed on the muddy quay, and, as the smell at this point was anything but agreeable, and the sun piping hot, I made tracks for my quarters as fast as possible. I found I was billeted on a Señor Rivas, who lived at some distance from the river; and I might have had a difficulty in finding my way, but that the adjutant, who spoke Spanish, was quartered there, too, and I had but to put myself under his guidance. Mighty glad I was to get under shelter, and to take in succession a cup of good coffee, a cigar, and a siesta. But that which pleased me most was that the señor had two pretty daughters, Luisa and Helena.

"'Come along, my boy,' said Power, the adjutant, shaking me as I still lay snoring. 'It's cool now, and I'm going to see the recruits land. Are you ready for a walk?'

"'I'm ready, all that's left of me; bedad, I think the musquitoes have eaten off both my ears,' said I, rubbing the injured parts.

"Off we started, and were down at the quay in half the time we took to come from it. It was just as well we got there, for the men were in bad humour at being kept on board for some hours after the officers landed, though there was a good reason for it, to save them, namely, from exposure to the sun in the heat of the day.

"However the boys, as Donnelly, the orderly sergeant, called them, soon showed their ill-humour. Among the natives who were helping to get their kits out of the boats, was a huge negro. He stood six feet five at the least, and had lots of sinew, and a head like that of a bonassus. He picked up the heaviest box like a feather, and walked away with it; but, in trying to get hold of too many things at once, he let one man's kit fall into the water. It was quickly fished out again, but with plenty of black mud sticking to it.

"'Tare and 'ounds,' said the man to whom it belonged, 'you great murthering villain! is that the way you wash clothes in your counthrey, with mud for soap, to make 'em as black as your own ugly face. Take that, thin!'

"With these words he struck the giant a blow on the head as he was leaning over to get hold of some more boxes. It was a hard knock, and sounded as if one had struck a paving-stone with a heavy mallet, but it made no more impression on the African than it would have done on a buffalo. It roused his fury, however, which he showed very much as a buffalo would have done. He shook his great head, and glared about him like a demon, then went back a few paces, and putting his head down, ran at poor Paddy, who was squaring away, not expecting that sort of combat, and struck him full amidships, sending him flying a dozen yards at least, and knocking all the breath out of his body. As flesh and blood cannot see a comrade mauled, without coming to the rescue, there was soon a ring of fellows round the nigger, all wanting to revenge Paddy's disaster. But one down, and another come on, blackey was a match for them all; and one after another down they went, none of them knowing what to do with an antagonist who came on like a ram.

"Things were looking 'entirely onpleasant,' as poor Paddy, who had begun the fight, and who was now sitting up again, coughing, observed, when Donnelly stepped up to the adjutant, and, touching his cap, said:

"'By yer honour's lave?'

"'Oh! of course, Donnelly, of course,' replied Power; and, turning to me, he added, 'Now you'll see some fun.'

"In a trice the sergeant had stripped, stepped into the ring, and confronted the African. He was a small man compared with his antagonist, and rather too handsome for a gladiator; but he was young, muscular, active as a deer, and his fine clear blue eyes were bright with confidence. There was no need of a challenge. In love and war gestures are everything, and no sooner did Donnelly present himself than the negro retreated, as before, a few paces, lowered his head, and came thundering at him with fifty-bull power. But this time the issue was very different from that of the preceding encounters. Just as the negro was almost upon him Donnelly made a side spring at him, and struck him a tremendous blow in the face with his knee, at the same time planting a right-hander behind his ear that would have stunned an ox. The effect of this judicious appeal to the knowledge-box of the African was to drive him obliquely headlong to the ground, the blood streaming from his nose and mouth. One would have thought that his late defeat would have taught him caution, and that he would have changed his tactics; but no—he rose lowered his head once more, and rushed upon Donnelly, like a thunderbolt. Again he was met, and his rush turned aside, by a fearful blow from Donnelly's knee, of such force that the negro turned a complete somersault, and then lay extended flat on his back, and this time without power to rise.

"'Faith, sergeant, you have killed the black baste this time entirely,' was the exclamation that greeted the victor. Power and I, afraid that the man was dead, made them lift him up, and give him some brandy. After a time he revived.

"Night fell before our labours in superintending the landing of the men were over, and we were glad to get back to our quarters without any further rambling about the town. The miasmatic influences at Angostura are increased tenfold after the sun goes down, and, to say nothing of the musquitoes, all sorts of noxious insects and reptiles get abroad, for which reasons, or for others as good, that I don't know, people there soon get to their beds."

"I don't wonder at that, major," said I, interrupting him, "if what the consul in

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Guyana related to me as having happened to him be a common occurrence. He said he was somewhere in the environs of Angostura, and had gone to sleep in his hammock, with his slippers on the ground within easy reach. Being an unconscionably early riser, he essayed to get up at the first faint streak of light, and before he could well see; so putting his foot out of the hammock, he felt with his great toe for his slipper, and, having found it, was about to thrust his foot into it when he found it was full of something odiously cold and slimy. Snatching back his foot, he made the same attempt at the other slipper, and with the same result, on which he was fain to ensconce himself under the clothes again till it was light, when, to his horror, he discovered a small rattle-snake curled up in each slipper!"

"Your example is *un peu fort*," quoth the major, "but still queer things do happen in Guyana. It is a fact that when the river has been in flood, people have been taken away from their own doors in Angostura by alligators. But, to return to my story, a day sufficed to exhaust the lions of the town. "Well! when all other amusements had been used up, no resource was left me but to fall in love with one of the señoritas in whose father's house I was living. The family of Señor Rivas consisted only of these two daughters, of whom the elder was nearly nineteen, the younger seventeen, and of one son, Francisco, who went by the familiar name of Panchito, a little boy of seven, a regular pickle, who, as the manner is in Venezuela, was generally running about naked. After a few weeks I picked up enough Spanish to let the tongue assist the eyes in tender expressions to the girls. The opportunities, however, of saying sweet things were rare, for in Venezuela the ladies of a family keep so much together, that, to use a sporting phrase, there is no getting single shots at them. For some time, too, I was in doubt as to which of the two sisters was to have my heart. Luisa was very fair, quiet, with brown hair, an unusual thing among Spanish creoles. Helena was bright, sparkling, roguish, a very pretty brunette, and, altogether, very charming. Upon the whole, my thoughts rather inclined to Luisa, and on one occasion, having caught her for a moment unguarded by the maternal dragon, I went so far as to ask if she would grant me an interview alone. She said she was never left by herself, and I had only just time to say I hoped I might have one kiss before I left Angostura, and to hear her reply in the shape of an intimation, accompanied by a faint blush, that it was not the custom in Venezuela, when her mother rejoined us. Meantime, Power, though he was so busy with drill and the other duties of an adjutant, did not fail to observe what was going on, and took me to task more than once about it.

"'Charley, my boy,' said he, 'what on earth are you after with those girls? If you don't mean to marry one of them, it's not fair to the old Don, who has been so hospitable to us, to give one of his little beauties a sore heart. And as for marriage, it's out of the question. We may get the route to-morrow, and have to join Bolivar, and who knows how many of us will come back? Besides, you have no cash, and at all events I hope you don't mean to settle down here and turn cane-planter.'

"I said that several officers who had been in the country before our arrival had married, and seemed to be very happy; and I instanced O'Halloran, who had been made a captain in our corps.

"'Pooh! nonsense, Charley,' replied Power, 'where's the happiness of having to leave your wife for months in places which are just as likely as not to fall into the enemy's hands? And as for O'Halloran, his example proves my case. O'Halloran has married a very pretty woman, who is about the most spiteful little devil I ever met, and gives him no end of trouble.'

"Power's remarks made an impression on me, and for some weeks I rather shunned than sought the ladies. But living in the same house with them, and being young, idle, and impulsive, it was not easy to be on cool terms with two young beauties, whose looks showed they were vexed at my assumed indifference. My self-imposed restraint increased the warmth of the feelings it concealed. In short, my liking for Luisa was fast ripening into love, when one morning Power came hurriedly into the room where I was sitting, and, slapping me on the shoulder, cried out:

"'Hurra! the route has come, my boy! We are to join Bolivar in the Apure. We march in ten days, and in less than a month we shall see, I expect, what the Spaniards are made of.'

"This glorious news made me jump up and shout, 'Viva el liberador!' at the same time that, I threw the book I was reading up to the ceiling. The report soon spread, and now all was bustle and excitement in place of the ennui that reigned before. We all set to work to buy horses and mules, and to prepare for the expedition, while the principal inhabitants vied with one another in entertaining us. In particular, the commandant of the garrison sent out invitations to every officer in the place to a ball for the night but one before our departure. Rumour said this entertainment was to be on a scale quite unique for Angostura. The only difficulty was to find a place large enough to hold the numbers invited, for even the town-hall was too small; but, by dint of certain contrivances in the shape of temporary pavilions, this was got over.

"Meantime, what with the gaieties going on in all directions, preparations for the march, and the anticipations of a first campaign, my pulse was up to fever heat. All my good resolutions went off to the place where good resolutions have been going for so many ages. Fortune generally favours the audacious, and my excitement seemed to make me worthy of the smiles of the fickle goddess. I resolved, therefore, somehow or other, to have a stolen interview with Luisa, and I thought only of the pleasure of a conversation with her alone, without

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caring for the result, or prescribing to myself any rules for what I should do or say on the occasion. It was no easy matter, however, even to let Luisa know what I was scheming. I made several fruitless attempts, and was at last fain to have recourse to the old expedient of bribing the lady's maid. Terésa, who waited on the señoritas in that capacity, was an Indian girl, not quite thirteen years old, but with a discretion beyond her years. She was a light brunette, with well-chiselled features, a very fairy in the symmetry of her tiny figure. She soon understood that I wanted a talk with her, so, under pretence of bringing me a cup of coffee, slipped into my room. I broke ground by giving her a couple of reals, and then produced a note I had written to Luisa; but, before entrusting her with it, I began to sound her as to the possibility of obtaining a tête-à-tête with her mistress. She was in the act of suggesting a plan to me when we heard steps coming along the corridor. The slow, heavy tread assured me it was my host. Terésa ejaculated, 'El amo,' 'My master,' skipped behind a mampára, or screen, which hid my washing apparatus, and so turned my bed-room into a sitting-room; for as for the hammock, that is used as much in the day as at night by South Americans.

"'You did not come to breakfast this morning. Out buying mules, I suppose?' said Rivas, entering. 'Well, I have come to smoke a cigar with you, and to give you a little advice for your march. You may trust me, for I have had some experience. I marched with Bolivar from Ocana in 1813, and have been out with Paez in the Apúre more than once.' With these words the worthy señor seated himself, and went on, interminably as it seemed to me, recounting his adventures, smoking, and prosing to an extent that wound up my feelings to a pitch of desperation. At last I interrupted a long story by declaring that I was obliged to go out to look at a horse I thought of buying. It was an unlucky excuse, for Rivas declared he would walk with me.

"'Panchito,' he called to the urchin who just then ran past my door, 'tell your mother I want to speak to her for a moment.'

"'The madre has gone over the way to the Senora Ochoa's,' said Panchito, arresting his steps and coming into the room.

"'Well, then, where is Terésa? I will send her with a message.'

"'Terésa is here,' replied the enfant terrible. 'I saw her bring the Ingles some coffee half-an-hour ago.'

"'And has the Ingles swallowed her along with the coffee? or has he put her in his pocket?' said my host, laughing, and rapping his son slightly on the head with his cane.

"'Perhaps he has hidden her behind the screen,' retorted Panchíto, and the little wretch made a dart to get behind it. I caught him, but too late to prevent him laying hold of the screen, and down it came with the pull.

"'Terésa!' exclaimed the old Don, staring at the girl and starting back, while his yellow face assumed a cadaverous hue with surprise and annoyance, 'por mi fé! you shall pay for this.' Then turning to me, he added, 'Senor, I have been giving you some hints for campaigning; let me conclude by advising you never to make a foray in a friend's hacienda.' With these words, Senor Rivas made me a stiff bow and quitted the room, and was followed by Terésa and Panchíto, the latter ruefully rubbing his head, which had been bruised by the falling screen.

"Left to myself, I could not help laughing at what had occurred, though I was excessively vexed at the contretemps. I reflected, too, that Rivas would probably tell his wife, and that so the affair would become known to Luisa by which my position with her would, I thought, hardly be improved. It turned out that I was wrong, however, in this part of my supposition. The next time I met the Senora and her daughters, the former indeed showed that she was displeased by her stiff behaviour. But I saw by the half-timid, half-arch glances of the girls, and by an undefinable something in their manner, that they knew what had taken place, and were by no means offended. The fact, no doubt, was, as my greater experience of life now convinces me, that Terésa made each senorita believe that I was in love with her, and each was too conscious of her own charms to feel any jealousy of Terésa, or to doubt that she came to my room for any purpose but what she really did. Opportunity for explanation there was none, but I consoled myself with the knowledge that we should meet at the ball, and I was determined to tell Luisa then all about it.

"Parties begin at an early hour in Venezuela. At nine P.M., the night after my adventure with Terésa, I found myself dancing with Luisa at the commandant's ball. The room was crammed to suffocation, and the most jealous chaperone could hardly in such a crowd maintain a successful espionage on the doings of the girls under her charge. I gave Luisa my version of the affair with Terésa; and after we had laughed over it sufficiently, I obtained her hand for the next dance. I danced with her and Helena repeatedly. My spirits rose, I took Luisa to supper, I drank glass after glass of wine, and began to commit sundry extravagances. Luisa offered me a guayába. I refused it unless she would bite it first. I then devoured it like a maniac. In short, I lost control of myself, and ended by an offer of marriage, couched in the wildest terms of extravagant devotion. I was accepted, and my ardour would, perhaps, have made me too demonstrative, had not Luisa just then, perceiving her mother enter the supper-room, suddenly quitted my side with the remark, 'Mamma will be so glad to hear this; she has wished for this so much!'

"Impulsive persons are subject to violent reaction. I have outlived all that," continued the major; "but I was then peculiarly subject to such revulsions of feeling. Luisa's remarks somehow disturbed me, and I stood for a moment thinking over it. In the midst of my reverie a

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hand was laid on my shoulder, and a well-known voice said, 'Don't lose your time in thinking, Charlie, but go back to the ball-room. We sha'n't have any more dancing till we enter Caracas.' It was Power, and I could not help saying, 'Perhaps it would have been better if I thought a little more, especially before acting.' Something in my manner struck Power, who knew my character thoroughly. He had seen me dancing with Luisa, and my short speech having excited his suspicions, he said at once, 'Why, Charlie, you have not been making yourself a fool with one of those girls?' 'Indeed, but I have, though,' I replied. 'I have proposed to Luisa, and she has accepted me.' 'Then I forbid the banns,' said Power. 'You shall not make yourself such a blockhead. Aye! there they are,' he added, looking round and seeing Luisa with her mother. 'I'll bet the old woman is rejoicing at having hooked you.' In another mood I should have quarrelled with Power for this speech: but Luisa's parting remark had created a disagreeable feeling in my mind, which was heightened by this sneer. Seeing his advantage, Power set himself to improve the opportunity at once. 'Be a reasonable fellow, Charlie,' he said. 'We march the day after tomorrow. You surely don't mean to apply for leave of absence just when we are going to meet the enemy! Then as for engaging yourself, who the deuce can tell how long the campaign is going to last, or how it will end? Take my advice, and break it off at once.' 'It's all very well to say break it off,' I replied, 'but how am I to do it? Can I go and tell Luisa, ten minutes after proposing to her, that I meant nothing?' Power thought a moment with rather a serious face, and then resuming his usual bright look, exclaimed, 'I have it, Charley. You sha'n't have the pain of speaking to Luisa, and, moreover, I won't trust your courage in that quarter. Take another bottle of champagne, and then go and pop the question to her sister. Depend on't, after that you'll hear no more of the matter.' With these words Power filled me a tumbler of champagne. I drank it, and made up my mind to follow his advice.

"Now it so happened that Helena was dressed that night rather peculiarly. She wore a pink silk bodice and a white muslin skirt with very deep flounces of Venezuelan lace, and I remembered saying to her that it was a good costume for a ball, as a partner in search of her could tell her colours a long way off. 'I shall soon find her,' said I to myself, 'but how shall I account for having neglected her for so many dances, and then coming all at once and proposing to her? Let me see; perhaps I had better slip a note in her hand, and then vanish. I have promised Power to do what he said, but I don't half like the thing, and least said, soonest mended.' Acting on this idea, I walked off into one of the retiring-rooms, got pencil and paper, and wrote, 'Dearest, I have tried in vain to conceal my feelings; but now that I am on the eve of leaving you, I can no longer restrain them. Though I have appeared to be engrossed in another quarter, this has only been a mask to allow me to follow you with my eyes, and assure myself that your love is not given to another. I see now, or think I see, that you are free; suffer me then to offer you my heart, which indeed has long been yours.' Having signed this effusion, I returned to the refreshment-room, and, fortifying myself with several additional bumpers, I proceeded in search of Helena. But the great quantity of wine I had taken, the heat and the excitement I felt, had their effect on my brain. The room seemed to turn round, as well as the dancers; I came, somehow or other, into collision with several people, and made excuses in a thick voice, which sounded oddly even to myself. I was conscious of my condition, and felt I must get out into the air, or make an unpleasant exhibition of myself. Just at that moment I came on the pink bodice. The wearer was not dancing, but leaning against an open window with one white arm, while the other hung beside her. I slipped my note into the open hand, and the fingers, as if experienced in the reception of such missives, tightened on it. I turned and made off through the crowd; but as I did so, she turned too. I half caught her look, and the features seemed to me strangely unlike those of Helena.

"In what manner I returned to the house of Senor Rivas I know not. The open air, instead of sobering me, seemed to make me worse; but the first thing I distinctly recognized was a horribly cold sensation in my left hand. On drawing it towards me, a squelch of falling water followed, and I found I had been lying with my hand in the ewer, out of which I suppose I had been drinking. Getting up with a splitting headache, I dressed slowly, and had scarce refreshed myself with a cup of coffee, when somebody knocked at the door. I called out 'Entrate,' and, to my surprise, in stepped an Irish officer I knew by sight only, who, without a word of preface, handed me a challenge from O'Halloran.

"After reading the epistle twice, and looking a third time at the address, to make sure I was the party intended, I turned to Kelly—that was the name of the officer—and said: 'Will you have the goodness to explain what this means? I think there must be some mistake.'

"'Mistake, sir,' said Kelly; 'you're mighty fond, sir, of that word "mistake." Ye said it was a mistake last night; but, faith, sir, it's a mistake that there's only one way of clearing up.' Then putting his hand into his pocket and producing another note, he handed it to me with great ceremony, saying, 'Do you call that a mistake, sir?'

"What was my surprise, on opening the note, to find it was the same I had written to Helena. I held it for several minutes without saying a word, while I endeavoured to recall the incidents of the preceding night. By degrees I came to the conclusion that I must somehow have mistaken O'Halloran's wife for Helena, and this idea became certainty when Kelly, who was an old hand at duelling, said impatiently: 'Pshaw, sir! a man of honour never makes

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mistakes in affairs of this kind. Mention your friend, sir, at once, and have done with it.'

"Stung with his words and manner, I exclaimed: 'My friend, sir, is Lieutenant Power. His room is close by, so no time need be wasted; and, excuse me, if I say the sooner you relieve me of your presence the better.'

"'You're polite, sir,' retorted Kelly, frowning, and rising from his chair, "and, maybe, I'll ask you to explain those words; but one mistake at a time. Good morning, sir.'

"Ten minutes afterwards Power entered my room with a grave air.

"'Milligan,' he said, 'this is a serious business. Of course, it was a horrid mistake. I know that well enough; but there is no explaining matters of this sort to a fellow like Kelly. Then O'Halloran is mad with jealousy, and perfectly unreasonable, besides, I hear he tried to strike you, and that you knocked him down. They say he wanted to have it out over a handkerchief on the spot, and that, seeing how tipsy you were, they forced him away with great difficulty. Blenkens of ours says he literally foamed at the mouth, and kept shouting, "I'll not wait till morning. Blood and 'ouns, I'll not wait." I've arranged that the affair shall come off at five P.M., with pistols. I don't think you have a pair with hair triggers. I have, and I know by experience that they shoot straight. If you have anything to settle, I advise you to do it at once, for O'Halloran is a good shot when he is cool, but I hope his fury will make him miss. Anyhow, you must not try to miss him, or fire into the air, for he will certainly hit you, if he can. The only good thing is that this has broken off your affair with Luisa. The old señora has heard of your giving a note to Madame O'Halloran, and vows her daughter shall have nothing to do with you.'

"'I'll be ready, Power,' I said, 'and I'll just put down a few things I want you to do, if anything happens to me. After which, I shall turn in again and have a sleep; for I feel tired, and I should like to come to the ground cool and comfortable." I said this more to be left to myself than for anything else, but after penning my memorandum, and drinking some of the delicious sherbet they make in Guyana from the juice of the pomegranate, I did really go to sleep for several hours. Looking at my watch when I awoke, I found it was half-past three, so I took a cold bath and prepared to accompany Power. At a quarter past four he came to my room, we walked down to the street and started off at a brisk rate into the country to the west of the city. About two miles out of the town we came to a ruined garden-house, where Kelly and O'Halloran were waiting for us. Power and Kelly saluted each other, but to my cold bow O'Halloran only returned a ferocious stare. Kelly then led the way through the garden to a lane between walls, and not more than ten feet broad, when he stopped short, saying, 'This is the place; the sun won't be in their eyes here.' I must confess I was a good deal surprised at the choice of such a spot for the encounter, where, when we were placed, we should not be more than eight feet from one another, and where the wall would assist one so much in taking aim. But my blood was up. I was quite prepared to fight even across a handkerchief. Power, however, did not take the matter so coolly. He spoke a few words in a low voice to Kelly, but his manner convinced me he was much exasperated. Kelly, however, was obstinate, and after a short parley O'Halloran and myself were placed opposite to one another, but with our faces to the wall. Kelly then said, 'Now gentlemen, I shall ask you, "Are you ready?" and at the last word you will turn round and fire. Gentlemen,' he continued, 'are you ——' Before he could get out the word "ready" there was an explosion, a bullet whizzed past my left ear, grazing it slightly, and by an involuntary impulse I wheeled round and fired. O'Halloran leaped up several feet from the ground and fell forward. The ball had passed through his heart. I threw myself on my knees and raised the fallen man. His eyes were fixed, a thin jet of blood issued from his mouth, he was quite dead.

"'He fired a moment too soon,' said Kelly; 'but, by the powers, he has paid for his mistake.'

"That word reminded me of the absurd origin of the quarrel. I was in no mood, as you may imagine, to allow the hateful blunder to produce any more mischief, so I frankly told Kelly at once by what accident the note had come into the possession of O'Halloran's wife, and Power corroborated my statement.

"'Well,' said Kelly, 'it's a pity, so it is, but it can't be helped now. You have behaved like a man of honour, and I see, after all, that it was a mistake!'

"With these words the major concluded his story. I had finished my fourth cigar. 'Good night, major,' I said. 'I am glad that my mistake ended better than yours.'

"'Oh, faith, my dear sir,' said he, 'you know it was no mistake at all with you; but, anyhow, I'm glad it ended as it did.'"

The third and concluding Portion of

GEORGE SILVERMAN'S EXPLANATION,

BY CHARLES DICKENS,

Will be published next week.

The third Portion of

HOLIDAY ROMANCE,

BY CHARLES DICKENS,

Will be published in the monthly part for March, and the Romance will be concluded in the monthly part for April.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XV.

THE Sergeant remained silent, thinking his own thoughts, till we entered the plantation of firs which led to the quicksand. There he roused himself, like a man whose mind was made up, and spoke to me again.

"Mr. Betteredge," he said, "as you have honoured me by taking an oar in my boat, and as you may, I think, be of some assistance to me before the evening is out, I see no use in our mystifying one another any longer, and I propose to set you an example of plain-speaking on my side. You are determined to give me no information to the prejudice of Rosanna Spearman, because she has been a good girl to *you*, and because you pity her heartily. Those humane considerations do you a world of credit, but they happen in this instance to be humane considerations clean thrown away. Rosanna Spearman is not in the slightest danger of getting into trouble—no, not if I fix her with being concerned in the disappearance of the Diamond, on evidence which is as plain as the nose on your face!"

"Do you mean that my lady won't prosecute?" I asked.

"I mean that your lady *can't* prosecute," said the Sergeant. "Rosanna Spearman is simply an instrument in the hands of another person, and Rosanna Spearman will be held harmless for that other person's sake."

He spoke like a man in earnest—there was no denying that. Still, I felt something stirring uneasily against him in my mind. "Can't you give that other person a name?" I said.

"Can't *you*, Mr. Betteredge?"

"No."

Sergeant Cuff stood stock still, and surveyed me with a look of melancholy interest.

"It's always a pleasure to me to be tender towards human infirmity," he said. "I feel particularly tender at the present moment, Mr. Betteredge, towards you. And you, with the same excellent motive, feel particularly tender towards Rosanna Spearman, don't you? Do you happen to know whether she has had a new outfit of linen lately?"

What he meant by slipping in this extraordinary question unawares, I was at a total loss to imagine. Seeing no possible injury to Rosanna if I owned the truth, I answered that the girl had come to us rather sparely provided with linen, and that my lady, in recompense for her good conduct (I laid a stress on her good conduct), had given her a new outfit not a fortnight since.

"This is a miserable world," says the Sergeant. "Human life, Mr. Betteredge, is a sort of target—misfortune is always firing at it, and always hitting the mark. But for that outfit, we should have discovered a new nightgown or petticoat among Rosanna's things, and have nailed her in that way. You're not at a loss to follow me, are you? You have examined the servants yourself, and you know what discoveries two of them made outside Rosanna's door. Surely you know what the girl was about yesterday, after she was taken ill? You can't guess? Oh, dear me, it's as plain as that strip of light there, at the end of the trees. At eleven, on Thursday morning, Superintendent Seegrave (who is a mass of human infirmity) points out to all the women servants the smear on the door. Rosanna has her own reasons for suspecting her own things; she takes the first opportunity of getting to her room, finds the paint-stain on her nightgown, or petticoat, or what not, shams ill, and slips away to the town, gets the materials for making a new petticoat or nightgown, makes it alone in her room on the Thursday night, lights a fire (not to destroy it; two of her fellow-servants are prying outside her door, and she knows better than to make a smell of burning, and to have a lot of tinder to get rid of)—lights a fire, I say, to dry and iron the substitute dress after wringing it out, keeps the stained dress hidden (probably *on* her), and is at this moment occupied in making away with it, in some convenient place, on that lonely bit of beach ahead of us. I have traced her this evening to your fishing village, and to one particular cottage, which we may possibly have to visit, before we go back. She stopped in the cottage for some time, and she came out with (as I believe) something hidden under her cloak. A cloak (on a woman's back) is an emblem of charity—it covers a multitude of sins. I saw her set off northwards along the coast, after leaving the cottage. Is

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your sea-shore here considered a fine specimen of marine landscape, Mr. Betteredge?"

I answered, "Yes," as shortly as might be.

"Tastes differ," says Sergeant Cuff. "Looking at it from my point of view, I never saw a marine landscape that I admired less. If you happen to be following another person along your sea-coast, and if that person happens to look round, there isn't a scrap of cover to hide you anywhere. I had to choose between taking Rosanna in custody on suspicion, or leaving her, for the time being, with her little game in her own hands. For reasons, which I won't trouble you with, I decided on making any sacrifice rather than give the alarm as soon as to-night to a certain person who shall be nameless between us. I came back to the house to ask you to take me to the north end of the beach by another way. Sand—in respect of its printing off people's footsteps—is one of the best detective officers I know. If we don't meet with Rosanna Spearman by coming round on her this way, the sand may tell us what she has been at, if the light only lasts long enough. Here *is* the sand. If you will excuse my suggesting it—suppose you hold your tongue, and let me go first?"

If there is such a thing known at the doctor's shop as a *detective-fever*, that disease had now got fast hold of your humble servant. Sergeant Cuff went on between the hillocks of sand, down to the beach. I followed him (with my heart in my mouth); and waited at a little distance for what was to happen next.

As it turned out, I found myself standing nearly in the same place where Rosanna Spearman and I had been talking together when Mr. Franklin suddenly appeared before us, on arriving at our house from London. While my eyes were watching the Sergeant, my mind wandered away in spite of me to what had passed, on that former occasion, between Rosanna and me. I declare I almost felt the poor thing slip her hand again into mine, and give it a little grateful squeeze to thank me for speaking kindly to her. I declare I almost heard her voice telling me again that the Shivering Sand seemed to draw her to it, against her own will, whenever she went out—almost saw her face brighter again, as it brightened when she first set eyes upon Mr. Franklin coming briskly out on us from among the hillocks. My spirits fell lower and lower as I thought of these things—and the view of the lonesome little bay, when I looked about to rouse myself, only served to make me feel more uneasy still.

The last of the evening light was fading away; and over all the desolate place there hung a still and awful calm. The heave of the main ocean on the great sand-bank out in the bay, was a heave that made no sound. The inner sea lay lost and dim, without a breath of wind to stir it. Patches of nasty ooze floated, yellow-white, on the dead surface of the water. Scum and slime shone faintly in certain places, where the last of the light still caught them on the two great spits of rock jutting out, north and south, into the sea. It was now the time of the turn of the tide: and even as I stood there waiting, the broad brown face of the quicksand began to dimple and quiver—the only moving thing in all the horrid place.

I saw the Sergeant start as the shiver of the sand caught his eye. After looking at it for a minute or so, he turned and came back to me.

"A treacherous place, Mr. Betteredge," he said; "and no signs of Rosanna Spearman anywhere on the beach, look where you may."

He took me down lower on the shore, and I saw for myself that his footsteps and mine were the only footsteps printed off on the sand.

"How does the fishing village bear, standing where we are now?" asked Sergeant Cuff.

"Cobb's Hole," I answered (that being the name of the place), "bears as near as may be, due south."

"I saw the girl this evening, walking northward along the shore, from Cobb's Hole," said the Sergeant. "Consequently, she must have been walking towards this place. Is Cobb's Hole on the other side of that point of land there? And can we get to it—now it's low water—by the beach?"

I answered, "Yes," to both those questions.

"If you'll excuse my suggesting it, we'll step out briskly," said the Sergeant. "I want to find the place where she left the shore, before it gets dark."

We had walked, I should say, a couple of hundred yards towards Cobb's Hole, when Sergeant Cuff suddenly went down on his knees on the beach, to all appearance seized with a sudden frenzy for saying his prayers.

"There's something to be said for your marine landscape here, after all," remarked the Sergeant. "Here are a woman's footsteps, Mr. Betteredge! Let us call them Rosanna's footsteps, until we find evidence to the contrary that we can't resist. Very confused footsteps, you will please to observe—purposely confused, I should say. Ah, poor soul, she understands the detective virtues of sand as well as I do! But hasn't she been in rather too great a hurry to tread out the marks thoroughly? I think she has. Here's one footstep going *from* Cobb's Hole; and here is another going back to it. Isn't that the toe of her shoe pointing straight to the water's edge? And don't I see two heel-marks further down the beach, close at the water's edge also? I don't want to hurt your feelings, but I'm afraid Rosanna is sly. It looks as if she had determined to get to that place you and I have just come from, without leaving any marks on the sand to trace her by. Shall we say that she walked through the water from this point till she got to that ledge of rocks behind us, and came back the same way, and then took to the beach again where those two heel-marks are still left. Yes, we'll say that. It seems to fit in with my notion that she had something under her cloak, when she left the cottage. No! not something to destroy—for, in that case, where would have been the need of all these precautions to prevent my tracing the place at which her walk ended? Something to hide is, I think, the better guess of the two. Perhaps,

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if we go on to the cottage, we may find out what that something is?"

At this proposal, my detective fever suddenly cooled. "You don't want me," I said. "What good can I do?"

"The longer I know you, Mr. Betteredge," said the Sergeant, "the more virtues I discover. Modesty—oh dear me, how rare modesty is in this world! and how much of that rarity you possess! If I go alone to the cottage, the people's tongues will be tied at the first question I put to them. If I go with you, I go introduced by a justly respected neighbour, and a flow of conversation is the necessary result. It strikes me in that light; how does it strike you?"

Not having an answer of the needful smartness as ready as I could have wished, I tried to gain time by asking him what cottage he wanted to go to.

On the Sergeant describing the place, I recognised it as a cottage inhabited by a fisherman named Yolland, with his wife and two grown-up children, a son and a daughter. If you will look back, you will find that, in first presenting Rosanna Spearman to your notice, I have described her as occasionally varying her walk to the Shivering Sand, by a visit to some friends of hers at Cobb's Hole. Those friends were the Yollands—respectable, worthy people, a credit to the neighbourhood. Rosanna's acquaintance with them had begun by means of the daughter, who was afflicted with a misshapen foot, and who was known in our parts by the name of Limping Lucy. The two deformed girls had, I suppose, a kind of fellow-feeling for each other. Any way, the Yollands and Rosanna always appeared to get on together, at the few chances they had of meeting, in a pleasant and friendly manner. The fact of Sergeant Cuff having traced the girl to *their* cottage, set the matter of my helping his inquiries in quite a new light. Rosanna had merely gone where she was in the habit of going; and to show that she had been in company with the fisherman and his family was as good as to prove that she had been innocently occupied, so far, at any rate. It would be doing the girl a service, therefore, instead of an injury, if I allowed myself to be convinced by Sergeant Cuff's logic. I professed myself convinced by it accordingly.

We went on to Cobb's Hole, seeing the footsteps on the sand, as long as the light lasted.

On reaching the cottage, the fisherman and his son proved to be out in the boat; and Limping Lucy, always weak and weary, was resting on her bed up-stairs. Good Mrs. Yolland received us alone in her kitchen. When she heard that Sergeant Cuff was a celebrated character in London, she clapped a bottle of Dutch gin and a couple of clean pipes on the table, and stared as if she could never see enough of him.

I sat quiet in a corner, waiting to hear how the Sergeant would find his way to the subject of Rosanna Spearman. His usual roundabout manner of going to work proved, on this occasion, to be more roundabout than ever. How he managed it is more than I could tell at the time, and more than I can tell now. But this is certain, he began with the Royal Family, the Primitive Methodists, and the price of fish; and he got from that (in his dismal, underground way) to the loss of the Moonstone, the spitefulness of our first housemaid, and the hard behaviour of the women-servants generally towards Rosanna Spearman. Having reached his subject in this fashion, he described himself as making his inquiries about the lost Diamond, partly with a view to find it, and partly for the purpose of clearing Rosanna from the unjust suspicions of her enemies in the house. In about a quarter of an hour from the time when we entered the kitchen, good Mrs. Yolland was persuaded that she was talking to Rosanna's best friend, and was pressing Sergeant Cuff to comfort his stomach and revive his spirits out of the Dutch bottle.

Being firmly persuaded that the Sergeant was wasting his breath to no purpose on Mrs. Yolland, I sat enjoying the talk between them, much as I have sat, in my time, enjoying a stage play. The great Cuff showed a wonderful patience; trying his luck drearily this way and that way, and firing shot after shot, as it were, at random, on the chance of hitting the mark. Everything to Rosanna's credit, nothing to Rosanna's prejudice—that was how it ended, try as he might; with Mrs. Yolland talking nineteen to the dozen, and placing the most entire confidence in him. His last effort was made, when we had looked at our watches, and had got on our legs previous to taking leave.

"I shall now wish you good night, ma'am," says the Sergeant. "And I shall only say, at parting, that Rosanna Spearman has a sincere well-wisher in myself, your obedient servant. But, oh dear me! she will never get on in her present place; and my advice to her is—leave it."

"Bless your heart alive! she is *going* to leave it!" cries Mrs. Yolland. (Nota Bene—I translate Mrs. Yolland out of the Yorkshire language into the English language. When I tell you that the all-accomplished Cuff was every now and then puzzled to understand her until I helped him, you will draw your own conclusions as to what *your* state of mind would be if I reported her in her native tongue.)

Rosanna Spearman going to leave us! I pricked up my ears at that. It seemed strange, to say the least of it, that she should have given no warning, in the first place, to my lady or to me. A certain doubt came up in my mind whether Sergeant Cuff's last random shot might not have hit the mark. I began to question whether my share in the proceedings was quite as harmless a one as I had thought it. It might be all in the way of the Sergeant's business to mystify an honest woman by wrapping her round in a network of lies; but it was my duty to have remembered, as a good Protestant, that the father of lies is the Devil—and that mischief and the Devil are never far

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apart. Beginning to smell mischief in the air, I tried to take Sergeant Cuff out. He sat down again instantly, and asked for a last little drop of comfort out of the Dutch bottle. Mrs. Yolland sat down opposite to him, and gave him his nip. I went on to the door, excessively uncomfortable, and said I thought I must bid them good night—and yet I didn't go.

"So she means to leave?" says the Sergeant. "What is she to do when she does leave? Sad, sad! The poor creature has got no friends in the world, except you and me."

"Ah, but she has though!" says Mrs. Yolland. "She came in here, as I told you, this evening; and, after sitting and talking a little with my girl Lucy and me, she asked to go up-stairs by herself into Lucy's room. It's the only room in our place where there's pen and ink. 'I want to write a letter to a friend,' she says, 'and I can't do it for the prying and peeping of the servants up at the house.' Who the letter was written to I can't tell you: it must have been a mortal long one, judging by the time she stopped up-stairs over it. I offered her a postage stamp when she came down. She hadn't got the letter in her hand, and she didn't accept the stamp. A little close, poor soul (as you know), about herself and her doings. But a friend she has got somewhere, I can tell you; and to that friend, you may depend upon it, she will go."

"Soon?" asked the Sergeant.

"As soon as she can," says Mrs. Yolland.

Here I stepped in again from the door. As chief of my lady's establishment, I couldn't allow this sort of loose talk about a servant of ours going, or not going, to proceed any longer in my presence, without noticing it.

"You must be mistaken about Rosanna Spearman," I said. "If she had been going to leave her present situation, she would have mentioned it, in the first place, to *me*."

"Mistaken?" cries Mrs. Yolland. "Why, only an hour ago she bought some things she wanted for travelling—of my own self, Mr. Betteredge, in this very room. And that reminds me," says the wearisome woman, suddenly beginning to feel in her pocket, "of something I've got it on my mind to say about Rosanna and her money. Are you either of you likely to see her when you go back to the house?"

"I'll take a message to the poor thing, with the greatest pleasure," answered Sergeant Cuff, before I could put in a word edgewise.

Mrs. Yolland produced out of her pocket a few shillings and sixpences, and counted them out with a most particular and exasperating carefulness in the palm of her hand. She offered the money to the Sergeant, looking mighty loth to part with it all the while.

"Might I ask you to give this back to Rosanna, with my love and respects?" says Mrs. Yolland. "She insisted on paying me for the one or two things she took a fancy to this evening—and money's welcome enough in our house, I don't deny it. Still, I'm not easy in my mind about taking the poor thing's little savings. And to tell you the truth, I don't think my man would like to hear that I had taken Rosanna Spearman's money, when he comes back to-morrow morning from his work. Please say she's heartily welcome to the things she bought of me—as a gift. And don't leave the money on the table," says Mrs. Yolland, putting it down suddenly before the Sergeant, as if it burnt her fingers—"don't, there's a good man! For times are hard, and flesh is weak; and I *might* feel tempted to put it back in my pocket again."

"Come along!" I said. "I can't wait any longer; I must go back to the house."

"I'll follow you directly," says Sergeant Cuff.

For the second time, I went to the door; and, for the second time, try as I might, I couldn't cross the threshold.

"It's a delicate matter, ma'am," I heard the Sergeant say, "giving money back. You charged her cheap for the things, I'm sure?"

"Cheap!" says Mrs. Yolland. "Come and judge for yourself."

She took up the candle and led the Sergeant to a corner of the kitchen. For the life of me, I couldn't help following them. Shaken down in the corner was a heap of odds and ends (mostly old metal), which the fisherman had picked up at different times from wrecked ships, and which he hadn't found a market for yet, to his own mind. Mrs. Yolland dived into this rubbish, and brought up an old japanned tin case, with a cover to it, and a hasp to hang it up by—the sort of thing they use, on board ship, for keeping their maps and charts, and such-like, from the wet.

"There!" says she. "When Rosanna came in this evening, she bought the fellow to that. 'It will just do,' she says, 'to put my cuffs and collars in, and keep them from being crumpled in my box.' One and ninepence, Mr. Cuff. As I live by bread, not a halfpenny more!"

"Dirt cheap!" says the Sergeant, with a heavy sigh.

He weighed the case in his hand. I thought I heard a note or two of The Last Rose of Summer as he looked at it. There was no doubt now! He had made another discovery to the prejudice of Rosanna Spearman, in the place of all others where I thought her character was safest, and all through me! I leave you to imagine what I felt, and how sincerely I repented having been the medium of introduction between Mrs. Yolland and Sergeant Cuff.

"That will do," I said. "We really must go."

Without paying the least attention to me, Mrs. Yolland took another dive into the rubbish, and came up out of it, this time, with a dog-chain.

"Weigh it in your hand, sir," she said to the Sergeant. "We had three of these; and Rosanna has taken two of them. 'What can you want, my dear, with a couple of dog's chains?' says I. 'If I join them together they'll go round my box nicely,' says she. 'Rope's cheapest,' says I. 'Chain's surest,' says she. 'Who ever heard of a box corded with

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chain?' says I. 'Oh, Mrs. Yolland, don't make objections!' says she; 'let me have my chains!' A strange girl, Mr. Cuff—good as gold, and kinder than a sister to my Lucy—but always a little strange. There! I humoured her. Three and sixpence. On the word of an honest woman, three *and* sixpence, Mr. Cuff!"

"Each?" says the Sergeant.

"Both together!" says Mrs. Yolland. "Three and sixpence for the two."

"Given away, ma'am," says the Sergeant, shaking his head. "Clean given away!"

"There's the money," says Mrs. Yolland, getting back sideways to the little heap of silver on the table, as if it drew her in spite of herself. "The tin case and the dog chains were all she bought, and all she took away. One and ninepence and three and sixpence—total, five and three. With my love and respects—and I can't find it in my conscience to take a poor girl's savings, when she may want them herself."

"I can't find it in *my* conscience, ma'am, to give the money back," says Sergeant Cuff. "You have as good as made her a present of the things—you have indeed."

"Is that your sincere opinion, sir?" says Mrs. Yolland, brightening up wonderfully.

"There can't be a doubt about it," answered the Sergeant. "Ask Mr. Betteredge."

It was no use asking *me*. All they got out of *me* was, "Good night."

"Bother the money!" says Mrs. Yolland. With those words, she appeared to lose all command over herself; and, making a sudden snatch at the heap of silver, put it back, holus-bolus, in her pocket. "It upsets one's temper, it does, to see it lying there, and nobody taking it," cries this unreasonable woman, sitting down with a thump, and looking at Sergeant Cuff, as much as to say, "It's in my pocket again now—get it out if you can!"

This time, I not only went to the door, but went fairly out on the road back. Explain it how you may, I felt as if one or both of them had mortally offended me. Before I had taken three steps down the village, I heard the Sergeant behind me.

"Thank you for your introduction, Mr. Betteredge," he said. "I am indebted to the fisherman's wife for an entirely new sensation. Mrs. Yolland has puzzled me."

It was on the tip of my tongue to have given him a sharp answer, for no better reason than this—that I was out of temper with him, because I was out of temper with myself. But when he owned to being puzzled, a comforting doubt crossed my mind whether any great harm had been done after all. I waited in discreet silence to hear more.

"Yes," says the Sergeant, as if he was actually reading my thoughts in the dark. "Instead of putting me on the scent, it may console you to know, Mr. Betteredge (with your interest in Rosanna), that you have been the means of throwing me off. What the girl has done, to-night, is clear enough, of course. She has joined the two chains, and has fastened them to the hasp in the tin case. She has sunk the case, in the water or in the quicksand. She has made the loose end of the chain fast to some place under the rocks, known only to herself. And she will leave the case secure at its anchorage till the present proceedings have come to an end; after which she can privately pull it up again out of its hiding-place, at her own leisure and convenience. All perfectly plain, so far. But," says the Sergeant, with the first tone of impatience in his voice that I had heard yet, "the mystery is—what the devil has she hidden in the tin case?"

I thought to myself, "The Moonstone!" But I only said to Sergeant Cuff, "Can't you guess?"

"It's not the Diamond," says the Sergeant. "The whole experience of my life is at fault, if Rosanna Spearman has got the Diamond."

On hearing those words, the infernal detective-fever began, I suppose, to burn in me again. At any rate, I forgot myself in the interest of guessing this new riddle. I said rashly, "The stained dress!"

Sergeant Cuff stopped short in the dark, and laid his hand on my arm.

"Is anything thrown into that quicksand of yours, ever thrown up on the surface again?" he asked.

"Never," I answered. "Light or heavy, whatever goes into the Shivering Sand is sucked down, and seen no more."

"Does Rosanna Spearman know that?"

"She knows it as well as I do."

"Then," says the Sergeant, "what on earth has she got to do but to tie up a bit of stone in the stained dress, and throw it into the quicksand? There isn't the shadow of a reason why she should have hidden it—and yet she *must* have hidden it. Query," says the Sergeant, walking on again, "is the paint-stained dress a petticoat or a nightgown? or is it something else which there is a reason for preserving at any risk? Mr. Betteredge, if nothing occurs to prevent it, I must go to Frizinghall to-morrow, and discover what she bought in the town, when she privately got the materials for making the substitute dress. It's a risk to leave the house, as things are now—but it's a worse risk still to stir another step in this matter in the dark. Excuse my being a little out of temper; I'm degraded in my own estimation—I have let Rosanna Spearman puzzle me."

When we got back, the servants were at supper. The first person we saw in the outer yard was the policeman whom Superintendent Seegrave had left at the Sergeant's disposal. The Sergeant asked if Rosanna Spearman had returned. Yes. When? Nearly an hour since. What had she done? She had gone up-stairs to take off her bonnet and cloak—and she was now at supper quietly with the rest.

Without making any remark, Sergeant Cuff walked on, sinking lower and lower in his own estimation, to the back of the house. Missing the entrance in the dark, he went on (in spite of my calling to him) till he was stopped by a wicket-gate which led into the garden. When I joined him to bring him back by the right

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way, I found that he was looking up attentively at one particular window, on the bedroom floor, at the back of the house.

Looking up, in my turn, I discovered that the object of his contemplation was the window of Miss Rachel's room, and that lights were passing backwards and forwards there as if something unusual was going on.

"Isn't that Miss Verinder's room?" asked Sergeant Cuff.

I replied that it was, and invited him to go in with me to supper. The Sergeant remained in his place, and said something about enjoying the smell of the garden at night. I left him to his enjoyment. Just as I was turning in at the door, I heard The Last Rose of Summer at the wicket-gate. Sergeant Cuff had made another discovery! And my young lady's window was at the bottom of it this time!

That latter reflection took me back again to the Sergeant, with a polite intimation that I could not find it in my heart to leave him by himself. "Is there anything you don't understand up there?" I added, pointing to Miss Rachel's window.

Judging by his voice, Sergeant Cuff had suddenly risen again to the right place in his own estimation. "You are great people for betting in Yorkshire, are you not?" he asked.

"Well?" I said. "Suppose we are?"

"If I was a Yorkshireman," proceeded the Sergeant, taking my arm, "I would lay you an even sovereign, Mr. Betteredge, that your young lady has suddenly resolved to leave the house. If I won on that event, I should offer to lay another sovereign, that the idea has occurred to her within the last hour."

The first of the Sergeant's guesses startled me. The second mixed itself up somehow in my head with the report we had heard from the policeman, that Rosanna Spearman had returned from the sands within the last hour. The two together had a curious effect on me as we went in to supper. I shook off Sergeant Cuff's arm, and, forgetting my manners, pushed by him through the door to make my own inquiries for myself.

Samuel, the footman, was the first person I met in the passage.

"Her ladyship is waiting to see you and Sergeant Cuff," he said, before I could put any questions to him.

"How long has she been waiting?" asked the Sergeant's voice behind me.

"For the last hour, sir."

There it was again! Rosanna had come back; Miss Rachel had taken some resolution out of the common; and my lady had been waiting to see the Sergeant—all within the last hour! It was not pleasant to find these very different persons and things linking themselves together in this way. I went on up-stairs, without looking at Sergeant Cuff, or speaking to him. My hand took a sudden fit of trembling as I lifted it to knock at my mistress's door.

"I shouldn't be surprised," whispered the Sergeant over my shoulder, "if a scandal was to burst up in the house to-night. Don't be alarmed! I have put the muzzle on worse family difficulties than this, in my time."

As he said the words, I heard my mistress's voice calling to us to come in.

A PAIR OF HORSE-PICTURES.

At the great Langham horse-dinner, I laughed heartily in my sleeve when I heard purists objecting to trifling matters of taste, which they said affected their appetites—without, I'm bound to say, giving the least evidence of the fact. Their objections seemed sentimentally trivial to a man who had spent hours in seeing horses slaughtered and cut up,* and who was about to see their flesh sold wholesale for cats' meat. One of these superfine gentlemen thought the veterinary surgeon's certificate of the soundness of the animals we were about to eat was out of place in the drawing-room before dinner. Another declared the wooden effigies of dead horses, which grinned at us woodenly during the banquet, were in bad taste. A third would have it that "boiled withers," "farci," and similar playfulnesses ought not to have been on the bill of fare; and a fourth turned away from the photographic portraits, declaring that the sight of them made him ill.

"Do you mean to tell me that this is really horse?" said one old gentleman, across the table, in a timorous whisper, but with a tremendous air of having discovered a mare's nest. "Horse bonâ fide, you know; horse that's gone about, perhaps, eh?" (This definition was given as if it applied to a distinct species.) "You do! God bless my soul! what are we coming to? Horse, eh? Oh yes, I'm tasting it. Not bad, I dare say." (Very patronising here.) "*I* don't like the idea, though. Mere fancy, perhaps; but I don't. So I'll wait a little, and look at you." I never quite made out why this old gentleman had come at all. Whether he was a peripatetic public diner, who dropped in at great hotels whenever he felt hungry, and sat down to charity or other banquets, if they chanced to be going on, or whether he had been hoaxed by some friend, and had accepted an invitation without comprehending its character, it was impossible to say. But he seemed to partake of everything; and when his plate was nearly finished, to go through the old formula. "But is *this* horse, eh now? Is it indeed? and you like it? Well, I can't relish the idea myself; but I'll look at you." Never were the advantages of rapid eating better exemplified. Here was by far the largest consumer of food within our range calmly chewing the cud of bitter fancies after each dish, and assuming all the time a moral supremacy over his neighbours which was unassailable. There were many people

* See Extraordinary Horse Dealing, page 252.

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at the horse-dinner who shared this eating-philosopher's peculiarity. There is, however, an unerring test as to whether a good dinner has been enjoyed; and if any one doubts the quantity consumed at this banquet, let him go to the manager of the Langham and ask how much was put upon the table, and how much was left behind. To hear some men's talk, you might have fancied they brought no appetite to horse; but to see the same men eat, you would have concluded it to be their favourite dainty. It was marvellous to note the discrepancies between promise and performance. "I can't quite stand the notion of this," one genial spirit would remark, putting his finger on an item in the bill of fare. "Don't think I shall be able to manage that," his brother would chime in. But, lo! when the time came, both eat of both with remarkable persistence. Supposing horse-flesh to be unpalatable, the one hundred and fifty people at the Langham Hotel were exemplars of self-denial. Yet many proficients in the art of dining were there. The editor of the new "Epicure's Year-Book" rubbed shoulders with a gallant officer whose gastronomic experiences and prowess are well known. The Pall Mall clubs might have sent up deputations; so numerous were their members. Men from the great social centres of toryism and radicalism, of the arts and sciences, of the universities, the army, the navy, and the civil service, of travelled thanes and of city commerce, were all fused in a common anxiety to know the taste of horse. Here was the brilliant historian of our greatest modern wars; there, the celebrated painter who is following the steps of Wilkie: here, a physiologist whose fame is European; there, a lawyer whose learning is a proverb: here, a popular author whose diminutive is in the mouth of every school-boy; there, a man of science who has given lustre to an already well-known name. It was strictly a representative gathering, and had assembled on philosophic grounds. Out of the rank and file of the hundred and fifty diners were probably some in whom curiosity had been the ruling motive for attendance; but the men we have instanced, who are only typical of many others, were, doubtless, animated by something higher.

It is obvious, however, that the whole question of supply, the statistics of the horses employed, and of the horses destroyed while sound, must be sifted before the effect of making horse-flesh a common article of food can be decided on. And this is not so easy as might be thought. Even the figures given from the chair have been seriously impugned since; and neither the revenue returns nor the Board of Trade blue-book will supply the exact information hippophagists desire to know. The meeting at the Langham simply convinced a hundred and fifty more or less influentional people of what the twenty-two diners at Francatelli's already knew. For the plain truth is, that the great horse-banquet differed so little from other good public dinners, that no one present would have noticed anything unusual about soup, made dishes, or joints, had it not been for the peculiar circumstances under which we met. Let dinner-givers, whether experienced club-frequenters or young ladies just commencing house-keeping, picture to themselves guests who smell and taste each item as if anxious to detect unpleasantness. Let them imagine a scrutiny of every mouthful taken, which was almost hostile in its closeness, and let them say how many banquets would come out scathless from any such ordeal. How many people can give a large dinner in which everything shall be faultless? Are beef and mutton never tough? Do gravies never belie their promise? Is cooking invariably perfect? Who asks or wants to know ordinarily whether every member of a mixed company thoroughly enjoys every atom of every helping he eats? Yet this is the test the Langham dinner underwent. Men looked at each other curiously while eating, and each course ran the gauntlet of puns and satire. But the examination was in all cases close and searching; and between the fire of blind enthusiasm, on the one hand, and ice of hyper-criticism on the other, it was difficult for a plain man to form a calm judgment on the matter before him. The enthusiasts who, at a considerable expenditure of time, labour, and money, had promoted this and the preceding dinner, could scarcely be impartial. Accordingly, when a respectable but rather dull gentleman insisted that horse-meat was superior to venison, and spoke disrespectfully of those established favourites, beef and mutton, his talk fell as flat as the prejudiced whisperings of the queer old consumer opposite.

When the trumpet-blast sounded, and the mighty baron of horse came in on the shoulders of four cooks, a neighbour nudged me to say, of the imposing trumpeter in scarlet and gold, "Ex-militia man, sir; not a beef-eater at all. Uniform hired at a Jew clothier's; trumpet sent in from a music-shop. Very good get up. Uncommonly like the real thing; but his rendering of the 'Roast Beef of Old England' savours too much of the strong beer of old England, doesn't it? Hark! there's another of those liquid notes! Will they march right round the room? Is he to play before them all the way? Well, I only hope there'll be no accident; for if ever a beef-eater looked like a city man-in-armour *after* a Lord's Mayor's dinner, that's the man. Did you hear the bother they had with him just now? Asked him to strike a gong in the intervals of trumpet-blowing, and he indignantly declined. Said, with a manly hiccup, that he was only ''ired' to play one instrument, and 'that he wouldn't be put upon for all the 'orses in Hengland!' There he goes again; another false note! Well, well, so long as he doesn't assault the chairman, I suppose we must put up with it!" There was something extremely funny in these criticisms, for the beef-eater was marching round all the time with solemn step and slow, and mighty, if irregular, fanfaronades were being blown. "You can have

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no idea," continued my communicative friend, "of the difficulty the committee and secretary had in making this dinner 'go.' As for the latter, he's given up his time to it for months. His privacy has been invaded, his time absorbed, his home arrangements upset, and all because he's tried to beat down a prejudice. When the controversy commenced in the newspapers as to the advisability of eating horse-flesh, this gentleman rashly offered to make up a party to try the experiment. From that moment his time and liberty—I'd almost said his peace of mind —were gone. Strangers wrote to him from distant parts of Britain, saying they'd be in town on the following Thursday, and would drop in at his private house and take a horse-cutlet, about two. Other prudent people asked whether he meant to feed inquiring spirits gratuitously, or if he proposed to charge so much a head. Pious monomaniacs denounced him for attempting to introduce a food not recommended in Scripture, and insisted on the connexion between horse-meat and infidelity; and commercially minded strangers asked him familiarly how much he hoped to make out of his 'spec.' An average of thirty letters a day arrived on this subject alone; and what with trips to Paris, interviews with horse-dealers and horse-slaughterers (I smiled to myself here), statistical inquiries into the progress of horse-eating on the Continent, and meeting and exposing the arguments of friends and opponents at home, I can assure you that our honorary secretary has worked as hard at the introduction of the new meat as if it were his own private business. When he commenced operations, he found prejudice besetting him at every step. The hotels closed their doors in his face, with wonderful unanimity, directly they learned his errand. The butchers refused to kill the horse he had procured, because, 'if the hoofs or hide were seen coming out of their shops, it would be their ruin;' and nothing but the most persevering energy would have overcome the obstacles and trade-rules which stood in the way of inaugurating a 'horse-dinner in London.'"

All this information came to me in fits and starts; for the speaker, a stout and rather pompous personage, with an enormous double chin, partook plentifully of the good cheer before us, and thought nothing of giving up in the middle of a sentence to eat, always beginning again at the precise point he left off at, with "As I was saying just now." Meanwhile the banquet progressed admirably. Some filets of horse (imagine the poor jokes on filly!), with a full-flavoured brown gravy, were especially delicious, and the slices of cold horse sausage tasted like a veritable product of Lyons. But I hold to my original opinion that not one man in fifty of those present would have detected any difference in appearance, in tenderness, or in flavour, between the various preparations of horse and the ordinary dishes of a well-served dinner. A copious variety of wine was supplied, and, long before the chairman proposed the toast of the evening, the verdict of the company had been already won.

Twenty-four hours later, and at midnight, I again present myself at the horse-slaughtering establishment at Belle Isle.* It is in the full tide of work. Horses are being knocked down and cut up, and their flesh thrown into the huge boilers with infinite rapidity. At least six-and-thirty are wanted for to-morrow's supply, and, as business has been brisk during the week, it had been feared that there would not be enough in stock for the night's killing. But condemned horses have come in from all quarters within the last few hours, including eight which have dropped down dead in the streets. The yard and pound is full in consequence. We stumble against a cart containing a dead roan, "formerly belonging to the Marquis of Brandyford;" and see, by the glare of the shed-lights, a bay waiting to be stripped in another cart on its threshold. Poleaxing, hacking, carving, and boiling are going on inside, and continue through the night, and it is three o'clock on a dark and drizzling morning before the animals are all killed and stripped. In this time decayed hunters, worn-out hacks, cart-horses, ponies, "Cleveland" bays, cab-horses, and chargers have all succumbed to the mighty arm of Potler and his myrmidons, and have been thrown into the cauldrons and boiled down.

By four o'clock the slaughter-house is washed down and clean. The horse-meat is placed in great heaps upon the stones as fast as boiled; and is very like the huge hunks of workhouse beef I have seen turned out of parochial coppers. Soon after half-past five a cart is backed into the shed, and is piled up with boiled horse-meat. This done, it is driven off in the darkness to the branch establishment of the firm at Farringdon-street station. At six, Mr. Potler, as spruce as ever, but with a butcher's steel suspended from his waist, drives a lighter vehicle in, and, standing up in it, performs a remarkable feat of artificial memory. He is going round to between thirty and forty customers, all dealers in cats' meat, who have given him their orders on a preceding day. He has neither book nor note, but calls out their names and quantities with a precision that never seems to fail. "Three-quarter Twoshoes and six penn'orth!" "Arf a 'undred Biles and three penn'orth!" "Arf fourteen Limey and two penn'orth!" "'Undred and a arf, 'undred and three-quarters Till and nine penn'orth!" went on in rapid succession until we made bold to ask Mr. Potler where his memorandum was, and how he knew the different quantities required. "All in my 'ed, sir" (tapping it with a sly laugh). "'Aven't got no books nor pencils, I 'aven't, and don't want to," was his reply, which is corroborated by the stout proprietor, who stands at the scales, watches the weighing, and enters all Mr. Potler's items methodically on a sort of trade-sheet he carries in his hand. The first number,

* See page 258 of the last number.

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such as the "'undred and a arf," referred, it was interesting to learn, to the cats'meat of ordinary horse-flesh; the "penn'orths" are "tripe," and divide the quantities of each customer in the cart. "Tripe" is for the dog and cat of jaded appetite, who cannot relish plain food. Mr. Potler has no check upon his memory. He drives round in a certain direction, calling at the same houses in regular rotation, and delivers the "meat" as ordered, without scales or weighing-machine, and purely by eye and head. He is said rarely to make a mistake, and on his return at eleven o'clock will bring back from ten to twelve pounds sterling and an empty cart. Cash on delivery, is his motto, and the amount he hands in always tallies with the entries in the trade-sheet of his employer.

This employer is himself a study. At our previous visit we saw him dispensing hospitality in a cosy back parlour behind his counting-house. He now wears a low-crowned white hat, a little on one side; a large crimson shawl envelops his bulky neck, and hides his chin at will, and a big cutaway coat with flapped pockets, and waistcoat to match, covers his capacious frame. He is up to his knees in cats' meat. That is, the quantity on the floor is piled so high that when he is behind it at the scales he becomes what painters call a three-quarter length. He makes a decidedly sporting portrait. A jolly, burly, red-faced farmer from the Yorkshire wolds; a stage-coachman of the old school, when stage-coachmen were sometimes humorists and gentlemen; a prosperous churchwarden sort of man, who could fill the large corner pew of a country church admirably; a sharp-witted, free-handed trader, who'd give sovereigns away out of generosity, and bargain keenly for sixpences in the way of business;—any of these characters would fit our host's appearance. The history of his present calling is told us thus, with many a jolly laugh and shrewd twinkle of the eye, slapping his trowsers-pocket meanwhile for emphasis, and proffering excellent cigars: "If any one had told me two years ago that I'd ever have been a cats' meat man, I'd just have laughed them down. No more thought of it than you have at this moment, I give you my word. I'd done pretty well in my own business, and had retired. Got settled down in a pretty place in the suburbs, but used to pop in and out the city for amusement like; putting a bit of money in here and there as a spec, and watching how it would turn out. I used to dine among my friends, very often, at a place I dare say you know, where there's a four-o'clock ordinary and a capital glass of punch. Well, sir, one afternoon when three of us were chatting over our cigars, a man came in we all knew, and asked us if we were game to go in for a really good thing, though a funny one. We'd a rare laugh when we heard it was the horse-killing and cats' meat trade. After a little talk, however, very little—for we'd all been accustomed to go in to new things, and to have several irons in the fire—we agreed to try it together. The three of us paid the deposit-money next morning, and became the proud possessors of the largest horse-slaughtering business in the world. Then came the question, How was it to be worked? Not one of us had the least notion of doing what you see me doing now. To drop in on a Saturday, and divide the profits, to have little partnership dinners, with our managers coming in to dessert, drawing in a good deal of money, and having very little to do—that was our game. But the first three months told us it wouldn't do. We lost money, instead of making it. The 'meat' went anyhow, as you may say. Pounds slipped away without being accounted for. We could blame no one in particular, because we didn't know where the fault lay. What we did know, and precious quick too, was that it wouldn't answer. So another partner and myself came to a friendly arrangement with the third—the gentleman you saw here the other night—and agreed to become managers ourselves. Three days a week I'm here, as you've seen me, from five in the morning often until twelve at night, and the other three days my partner does the same. Having lived a good deal in America, where they say, 'if a man can't edit a newspaper, he can print it, and if he can't print it, he can sell it,' I always go in well when I go in at all So I know this business thoroughly. Where the meat goes to, what it fetches, and when its price is to rise, are all A B C to me now. I can knock horses on the head too, and could manage the concern if all the old servants were to leave me to-morrow. What affects the price of cats' meat? Why the cost of horses, and the number of them. Sometimes they drop off like rotten sheep, at others the season's healthy, and the supply low. We buy 'em dead and alive, remember. We've standing contracts with many of the largest employers of horses to take their diseased and worn-out and dead ones at a fixed price all round."

Turning round suddenly, and with a brisk chaffy manner, which was a strong contrast to his philosophic air when speaking to us, "Hallo! Jack, where's the pony this morning?" asked the acting partner. "Out earning money for you, master, again the summer," shouted a hoarse voice in reply. This was the first trade customer of the morning. He had wheeled a neat little barrow into the shed, which was filled from the heaps of "meat" still on the floor, and paid for with all speed. From this time, about half-past six, until half-past eight the flow of customers was strong and steady. The food was carried off in a variety of ways. Shabby-genteel women brought perambulators; children, baskets and barrows; men and boys, little carts. "Mind my doggie don't bite yer!" was shouted in the ear of one of our party, which made him jump away from a harmless panel-fresco of a Newfoundland dog who was eating "royal cats' meat" with an air of an epicure.

Most of the carts had pictorial panels. Some were scenes in high life. The late Prince Consort, her majesty, and the royal children

dispensing cats' meat from silver spoons to a litter of spaniels at their feet; an archbishop, seated in his study, in lawn sleeves, tempting a poodle to sit up by the promise of cats' meat; and an elderly lady of evidently high rank, for her coronet stood on the breakfast-table at her side, like a coffee-pot, coaxing a monster tabby with milk and meat, were among the pictures on the cart-sides. The ponies drawing them were smart trotters, well groomed and cared for; but the most celebrated were not brought out through the wetness of the morning. The owners were as artistic as their vehicles: some in long drab coats reaching to their heels; some in strange jackets in which one patch of colour had been so intertwined with another that the original hue was lost; some in nondescript garments, of which it was difficult to discern the beginning or end; all wonderfully brisk, funny, and personal. One man takes away a bag of horse-tongues, which are so wonderfully like those we see in the windows of ham and beef shops that we avoid asking its destination; others purchase horses' hearts, which we, at least, could not distinguish from those of bullocks; but the majority take the "meat" as it comes, pay for it, and go on their way. "It's a curious thing," said the stout proprietor, "that they're all so particular about having it boiled fresh. The act of parliament says horses are only to be slaughtered in certain hours; but that part of it has become a dead letter, simply because cats prefer the taste of horse-flesh which has been newly killed. Custom, sir, has overridden law, as it often does, and all because the London tabbies are so dainty that they don't like horse that's been killed too long over-night. Do the old favourite horses I told you of as being slaughtered to prevent their ever being ill treated—do they get sold for cats' meat too? I ask. That's just as gentlemen like. They can have the body buried, and, if they prefer it, we'll send men to their own places to kill for them. If they come here, it can be made quite private. We'd a baronet here, with an old pet, only yesterday. We always close these gates at such a time; for, hang me (with much vigour) if people don't seem to rise out of the pavement when anything's going on on the quiet. The great thing we guarantee is that a horse shall be put out of the way painlessly, and in the presence of witnesses, if it's wished; and that he'll not be found, ill-treated, in a cab, perhaps, ten years after he's supposed to be killed, as I've known happen before now."

Remarking, as we take our leave, that the smell of slaughtering and boiling is far less offensive than we had supposed, we learn that "it's the varnish-makers close to us that get us such a bad name. It's their stench, not ours, that sends people's fingers to their noses. The smell from those factories is horrible, and we have the credit of it. Horse-slaughtering doesn't cause any smell to speak of. I don't mean to say that we're at all times perfectly pure; but our business is a regular nosegay compared to the varnish trade, so it's hard we should be blamed for what we've no connexion with, and what is a greater nuisance to us than to any one else."

THE ROCHDALE TWENTY-EIGHT.

Yes, I am one of the twenty-eight, I am proud to say. We were pioneers, for we cut down the jungle of monopoly, broke up the boulders of high profits, and cleared the road for ourselves and our children of not a little roguery. See how many armies of co-operatives are marching triumphantly in our wake! We, the Rochdale twenty-eight, were pioneers, made the path for them, as the British engineers made the road to Senafe. Twenty-eight of us met together, exactly twenty-three years ago, and thought we might as well put in our own pockets the profits made by stiff butchers, uncivil grocers, and pitiless tally-men. So we clubbed together, and made up a pound a man—twenty-eight pounds in all—and began to sell tea, sugar, and coffee, in a small shop in a back street. Of course we were laughed at. Our fellow-workmen called us the twenty-eight merchant princes; but we persevered, and sold our two ounces of tea and half pounds of sugar cheerfully. One of our number took it in turn to attend three days each week at breakfast and dinner hour to sell. At first a penny pass-book did for a ledger, as we kept no accounts. We never went in debt, and we gave no credit. In two or three years our fellow-workmen found their laugh was on the wrong side. Our business became a thriving one, and the lads and lasses came in crowds to take shares and become their own merchants. We are an institution now, sir—a great English institution, with our well-paid managers, clerks, buyers, shopkeepers, and unpaid committee-men. Our books are always open to inspection, and every member learns once a quarter how his capital is growing.

We began, I said, with twenty-eight members; there are very nearly seven thousand of us now in this one society. If you want the exact numbers, you can have them: they were, on the 1st of January, 1868, precisely six thousand eight hundred and twenty-three. We are more now than we were this time last year by five hundred and seventy-seven; that proves how we are getting on. Here is our grand sheet almanack for 1868—we publish an almanack every year now, which our members fix up at home, and point to as an authentic record of our progress. You see by the directors' report for 1867, contained in the first column, that we don't do business in a back street now. How much money do you think we received last year across the counter for goods? Here it is: "Money received for goods sold, two hundred and eighty-four thousand nine hundred and ten pounds:" there is a trade for you! I wonder what the twenty-eight original pioneers would say if they looked out of the window of the back street shop and saw this almanack to-day. You will find we did more business by thirty-

four thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine pounds in 1867 than in 1866. Of course we made money—why shouldn't we, with such a roaring trade as that? Well, we cleared, after deducting all costs of management, rent, &c., exactly forty-one thousand six hundred and nineteen pounds! I would like to show that entry to the twenty-eight originals. But how they would stare if I read out to them the statement of our accumulated capital. We possess, sir, a capital to-day of one hundred and twenty-eight thousand four hundred and thirty-five pounds, and that is something for equitable pioneers to boast of. Yet we do not hesitate to invest money in permanent improvements. You see our almanack is illustrated with a handsome engraving, in the legitimate way of old-established almanacks. That, sir, is our new central store, of cut stone, four stories high, built, as our architect, Mr. Cheetham, tells us, in Byzantine Gothic style. The great clock in front, you see, is surmounted by a beehive, for all are gathering honey within. We spent fifteen thousand five hundred pounds on that edifice, and it is, I do not fear to say, a very handsome ornament to the good town of Rochdale. Then we have erected a giant bakehouse, to supply pure and wholesome bread to those who may not be able to bake for themselves, and who object to the use of potato flour, ground rice, whiting, or alum in their loaf. We are investing, too, ten thousand pounds in building a good class of cottage houses in the town, just the thing required for steady workmen who like a comfortable pleasant home and a bright fireside. We have bought, also, a piece of the Larkfield estate—the name reminds one of the bird that sings near heaven's gate—and we are preparing plans for laying the ground out to the best advantage. Still our capital amounts to one hundred and twenty-eight thousand four hundred and thirty-five pounds, and we are considering how we may safely employ a portion of it. Parliament last year removed all restrictions but one upon the action of co-operative societies. We can enter upon any business we please now but that of banking, and Overend, Gurney and Co. are a caution to us not to wish to turn our money in that direction.

Yes; there are "withdrawals" from our society, and that to the tune of thirty-eight thousand nine hundred and eighty-two pounds. Workmen may wish to purchase a cottage, to portion a daughter, to extend or open in business, to help a son on in the world, or to meet, if Providence so wills, the cost of sickness. The shareholders can get their money at any time, with five per cent., up to the hour of withdrawal; so we pioneers offer greater advantages than savings-banks. But, notwithstanding these withdrawals, we have now twenty-eight thousand four hundred and forty-six pounds more capital than we possessed this time last year.

You want to know what we do with the profits? This almanack will tell you. We divide our profits quarterly. First of all, we allow interest at five per cent. per annum on all paid up shares. That in itself is no despicable dividend these times. Then we allow ten per cent. as depreciation for all fixed stock—a proportion rather in excess, you will say; but it is better to err on the right side. Thirdly, we deduct two and a half per cent. off the whole nett profits for educational purposes—that is a proper rule for pioneers to adopt; and when we have provided for all these items, we divide the remainder among the members in proportion to the money expended by them with the society. Last year each member received two shillings and seven-pence back out of every pound he spent on purchases at our stores. That profit, and the five per cent., and two and a half per cent. for educational purposes, would have gone elsewhere, without the slightest benefit to the consumers, only for the equitable pioneers.

You are curious to know what we mean by educational purposes. Well, again the almanack must tell you. We don't profess to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. We mean education for the social life of youth and manhood. We have, you see, a library of about seven thousand volumes of good and useful books, adapted to all classes and ages of readers. The pioneers are of no party in literature; we seek good everywhere. Moreover we have a very useful institution, called a Reference Library, always open, in which there are one hundred and fifty volumes of first-class works, well adapted for giving immediate information on subjects which concern all classes of the community. Then there are large globes, maps, atlases, and a telescope in every reading-room for the use of members. We know down in Rochdale all about the march of our army in Abyssinia. We have eleven news-rooms, all airy, cheerful apartments, well warmed and lighted, with comfortable seats and reading-desks. The news-rooms are situated in those parts of Rochdale where the working men chiefly live. They have not to walk far from home to the pleasant reading-room, where they will find laid out for them daily and weekly newspapers, periodicals, monthly magazines, and quarterly reviews, representing all shades of politics, religion, and social systems. I had almost forgotten to tell you, that if a working man wishes to borrow a microscope to examine fine work, or insects, or flowers gathered in his walks afield, or an opera-glass to scan the features of some distinguished lecturer or speaker, or a stereoscope to amuse and instruct the children, he can obtain the loan of them for a trifling fee. We sell the old newspapers and periodicals every three months, and then a mechanic can procure a set of a valuable periodical for a sum almost nominal.

The "twenty-eight" began trade with a very limited stock of groceries: everybody would want tea, coffee, and sugar, and the trade could be carried on with comparatively little trouble or expense. But under the name, "groceries," we now include an immense variety of articles. Our object, too, is to save time and trouble, and we think it an equitable thing that the artisan's wife or daughter should be able to purchase all she wants for the week's consumption, or, as to that matter, for half a year's

wear, at the one shop. We have ten depôts besides this grand central store which figures in our almanack. At each of these stores a child can buy the "general" groceries for the household, sure of getting the best articles and full weight. Where she buys the groceries she can procure all kinds of butcher's meat. We purchase our own fat cattle and prime wether mutton now, sir. We pioneers are rather proud when we see a drove of sleek-skinned, bright-eyed fat bullocks driven down the street, and know they will give juicy joints and rich soup to our wives and children. We make contracts, too, with breeders in the country, who send us up the carcases by rail. Our experience is not only that we get the best meat at a reasonable price, but more of it, somehow, to the pound weight. The lump of tallow never sticks at the bottom of the purchaser's scale in equitable shops, and our beams are of the same length on either side of the tongue. It would do your heart good on a Friday evening to see poor people, not members, making their little purchases. They know they won't be cheated, and that what they get, little or much, is good.

No; we don't sell drapery at all the stores. A gown or shawl, sir, is a matter requiring some consideration and due forethought. Our wives can afford a little walk for such a serious matter as the purchase of a bonnet or a cloak. We have four depôts for "drapery," and what a world of articles is included under that name! The wives like to bring their husbands with them to these depôts. Women, you know, sir, fancy a man's taste in the matter of dress; and if they do consult our taste, sir, we must be a little generous. A single store, but it is a large one, supplies the wants of the pioneers in tailoring; but we have three depôts for the sale of boots and shoes and noisy, but serviceable, clogs. At all the stores orders for coal are received, and the housewife gets the best Gilcreux or Whitehaven laid down comfortably in her coal-bunk without trouble. We like the half-holiday movement, too, and we close all our houses of business on Tuesdays at two o'clock. That breaks the week.

I said we were "pioneers," and that a multitude of co-operatives followed in our wake. Just glance at this return from the Rochdale Co-operative Corn-Mill Society. The members possess a capital of eighty-nine thousand pounds, and they did a trade, last year, of three hundred and fifty-six thousand four hundred and forty pounds. They have not totted up their profit and loss account for '67; but they made eighteen thousand one hundred and sixty-three pounds in 1866, on a cash business of two hundred and twenty-four thousand one hundred and twenty-two pounds. They deliver, every week, one thousand four hundred and eighty sacks of unadulterated flour, one hundred and twenty-eight loads of oatmeal, and eight hundred and ninety-two loads of malt and other goods. The members are now laying out ten thousand pounds in erecting malt-kilns; for the artisan requires good sound beer or ale, and there will be no coculus Indicus in a co-operative store.

No; we co-operatives are not altogether free from losses. We must expect now and then to meet with a rub, and we have suffered somewhat heavily in the matter of cotton. You see, the American civil war upset the cotton trade for a while altogether; and when the war ended, and cotton came from a hundred different sources, we met a loss amongst the rest by a sudden fall in the raw material. They say that cotton-brokers rigged the market; but I don't pretend to know the rights of it. We are working this co-operative manufacturing society at a profit now; but we lost thirteen thousand and thirty-four pounds in the last three years. We comfort ourselves with the thought that we cleared twenty-six thousand four hundred and sixty-one pounds since 1857; so the general balance of profit and loss is in our favour to the amount of thirteen thousand four hundred pounds, and we are doing a business of one hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year on a capital of one hundred and eighteen thousand nine hundred and ninety pounds.

We have, moreover, a co-operative building society, paying five per cent; and a provident sick and burial society, which has not incurred the animadversion of Mr. Tidd Pratt. We have, too, a wholesale society, for the supply of co-operative stores, with a capital of twenty-four thousand two hundred and eight pounds, doing a business of two hundred and fifty-five thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine pounds; but, being a wholesale concern, managed by a few, we are satisfied with a profit of only three thousand four hundred and fifty-two pounds yearly. A merchant, with the same amount of capital, would be content with a similar proportion of gain. Then there is a co-operative insurance company, just commencing to work; and as our means increase there is no knowing what business we may yet undertake: only we are all determined to proceed with care and caution, and not to risk what we have already won by rash speculation.

I think our almanack, single sheet as it is, gives us twenty-eight some reason to feel proud in being equitable pioneers.

GEORGE SILVERMAN'S EXPLANATION.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

IN NINE CHAPTERS. SEVENTH CHAPTER.

MY timidity and my obscurity occasioned me to live a secluded life at College, and to be little known. No relative ever came to visit me, for I had no relative. No intimate friends broke in upon my studies, for I made no intimate friends. I supported myself on my scholarship, and read much. My College time was otherwise not so very different from my time at Hoghton Towers.

Knowing myself to be unfit for the noisier stir of social existence, but believing myself qualified to do my duty in a moderate though earnest way if I could obtain some small preferment in the Church, I applied my mind to

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the clerical profession. In due sequence I took orders, was ordained, and began to look about me for employment. I must observe that I had taken a good degree, that I had succeeded in winning a good fellowship, and that my means were ample for my retired way of life. By this time I had read with several young men, and the occupation increased my income, while it was highly interesting to me. I once accidentally overheard our greatest Don say, to my boundless joy: "That he heard it reported of Silverman that his gift of quiet explanation, his patience, his amiable temper, and his conscientiousness, made him the best of Coaches." May my "gift of quiet explanation" come more seasonably and powerfully to my aid in this present explanation than I think it will!

It may be, in a certain degree, owing to the situation of my College rooms (in a corner where the daylight was sobered), but it is in a much larger degree referable to the state of my own mind, that I seem to myself, on looking back to this time of my life, to have been always in the peaceful shade. I can see others in the sunlight; I can see our boats' crews and our athletic young men, on the glistening water, or speckled with the moving lights of sunlit leaves; but I myself am always in the shadow looking on. Not unsympathetically—God forbid!—but looking on, alone, much as I looked at Sylvia from the shadows of the ruined house, or looked at the red gleam shining through the farmer's windows, and listened to the fall of dancing feet, when all the ruin was dark, that night in the quadrangle.

I now come to the reason of my quoting that laudation of myself above given. Without such reason: to repeat it would have been mere boastfulness.

Among those who had read with me, was Mr. Fareway, second son of Lady Fareway, widow of Sir Gaston Fareway, Baronet. This young gentleman's abilities were much above the average, but he came of a rich family, and was idle and luxurious. He presented himself to me too late, and afterwards came to me too irregularly, to admit of my being of much service to him. In the end I considered it my duty to dissuade him from going up for an examination which he could never pass, and he left College without taking a degree. After his departure, Lady Fareway wrote to me representing the justice of my returning half my fee, as I had been of so little use to her son. Within my knowledge a similar demand had not been made in any other case, and I most freely admit that the justice of it had not occurred to me until it was pointed out. But I at once perceived it, yielded to it, and returned the money.

Mr. Fareway had been gone two years or more and I had forgotten him, when he one day walked into my rooms as I was sitting at my books.

Said he, after the usual salutations had passed: "Mr. Silverman, my mother is in town here, at the hotel, and wishes me to present you to her."

I was not comfortable with strangers, and I dare say I betrayed that I was a little nervous or unwilling. For said he, without my having spoken:

"I think the interview may tend to the advancement of your prospects."

It put me to the blush to think that I should be tempted by a worldly reason, and I rose immediately.

Said Mr. Fareway, as we went along: "Are you a good hand at business?"

"I think not," said I.

Said Mr. Fareway then: "My mother is."

"Truly?" said I.

"Yes. My mother is what is usually called a managing woman. Doesn't make a bad thing, for instance, even out of the spendthrift habits of my eldest brother abroad. In short, a managing woman. This is in confidence."

He had never spoken to me in confidence, and I was surprised by his doing so. I said I should respect his confidence, of course, and said no more on the delicate subject. We had but a little way to walk, and I was soon in his mother's company. He presented me, shook hands with me, and left us two (as he said) to business.

I saw in my Lady Fareway, a handsome well-preserved lady of somewhat large stature, with a steady glare in her great round dark eyes that embarrassed me.

Said my Lady: "I have heard from my son, Mr. Silverman, that you would be glad of some preferment in the Church?"

I gave my Lady to understand that was so.

"I don't know whether you are aware," my Lady proceeded, "that we have a presentation to a Living? I say *we* have, but in point of fact *I* have."

I gave my Lady to understand that I had not been aware of this.

Said my Lady: "So it is. Indeed, I have two presentations; one, to two hundred a year; one, to six. Both livings are in our county: North Devonshire, as you probably know. The first is vacant. Would you like it?"

What with my Lady's eyes, and what with the suddenness of this proposed gift, I was much confused.

"I am sorry it is not the larger presentation," said my Lady, rather coldly, "though I will not, Mr. Silverman, pay you the bad compliment of supposing that *you* are, because that would be mercenary. And mercenary I am persuaded you are not."

Said I, with my utmost earnestness: "Thank you, Lady Fareway, thank you, thank you! I should be deeply hurt if I thought I bore the character."

"Naturally," said my Lady. "Always detestable, but particularly in a clergyman. You have not said whether you would like the Living?"

With apologies for my remissness or indistinctness, I assured my Lady that I accepted it most readily and gratefully. I added that I hoped she would not estimate my appreciation of the generosity of her choice by my flow of words, for I was not a ready man in that respect when taken by surprise, or touched at heart.

"The affair is concluded," said my Lady. "Concluded. You will find the duties very light, Mr. Silverman. Charming house; charming little garden, orchard, and all that. You will be able to take pupils. By the bye!—No. I will return to the word afterwards. What was I going to mention, when it put me out?"

My Lady stared at me, as if I knew. And I didn't know. And that perplexed me afresh.

Said my Lady, after some consideration: "Oh! Of course. How very dull of me! The last incumbent—least mercenary man I ever saw—in consideration of the duties being so light and the house so delicious, couldn't rest, he said, unless I permitted him to help me with my correspondence, accounts, and various little things of that kind; nothing in themselves, but which it worries a lady to cope with. Would Mr. Silverman also, like to——? Or shall I——?"

I hastened to say that my poor help would be always at her ladyship's service.

"I am absolutely blessed," said my Lady, casting up her eyes (and so taking them off of me for one moment), "in having to do with gentlemen who cannot endure an approach to the idea of being mercenary!" She shivered at the word. "And now as to the pupil."

"The——?" I was quite at a loss.

"Mr. Silverman, you have no idea what she is. She is," said my Lady, laying her touch upon my coat sleeve, "I do verily believe, the most extraordinary girl in this world. Already knows more Greek and Latin than Lady Jane Grey. And taught herself! Has not yet, remember, derived a moment's advantage from Mr. Silverman's classical acquirements. To say nothing of mathematics, which she is bent upon becoming versed in, and in which (as I hear from my son and others) Mr. Silverman's reputation is so deservedly high!"

Under my Lady's eyes, I must have lost the clue, I felt persuaded; and yet I did not know where I could have dropped it.

"Adelina," said my Lady, "is my only daughter. If I did not feel quite convinced that I am not blinded by a mother's partiality; unless I was absolutely sure that when you know her, Mr. Silverman, you will esteem it a high and unusual privilege to direct her studies; I should introduce a mercenary element into this conversation, and ask you on what terms——"

I entreated my Lady to go no further. My Lady saw that I was troubled, and did me the honour to comply with my request.

EIGHTH CHAPTER.

EVERYTHING in mental acquisition that her brother might have been, if he would; and everything in all gracious charms and admirable qualities that no one but herself could be; this was Adelina.

I will not expatiate upon her beauty. I will not expatiate upon her intelligence, her quickness of perception, her powers of memory, her sweet consideration from the first moment for the slow-paced tutor who ministered to her wonderful gifts. I was thirty then; I am over sixty now; she is ever present to me in these hours as she was in those, bright and beautiful and young, wise and fanciful and good.

When I discovered that I loved her, how can I say. In the first day? In the first week? In the first month? Impossible to trace. If I be (as I am) unable to represent to myself any previous period of my life as quite separable from her attracting power, how can I answer for this one detail!

Whensoever I made the discovery, it laid a heavy burden on me. And yet, comparing it with the far heavier burden that I afterwards took up, it does not seem to me, now, to have been very hard to bear. In the knowledge that I did love her, and that I should love her while my life lasted, and that I was ever to hide my secret deep in my own breast, and she was never to find it, there was a kind of sustaining joy, or pride, or comfort, mingled with my pain.

But later on—say a year later on—when I made another discovery, then indeed my suffering and my struggle were strong. That other discovery was——?

These words will never see the light, if ever, until my heart is dust; until her bright spirit has returned to the regions of which, when imprisoned here, it surely retained some unusual glimpse of remembrance; until all the pulses that ever beat around us shall have long been quiet; until all the fruits of all the tiny victories and defeats achieved in our little breasts shall have withered away. That discovery was, that she loved me.

She may have enhanced my knowledge, and loved me for that; she may have overvalued my discharge of duty to her, and loved me for that; she may have refined upon a playful compassion which she would sometimes show for what she called my want of wisdom according to the light of the world's dark lanterns, and loved me for that; she may—she must—have confused the borrowed light of what I had only learned, with its brightness in its pure original rays; but she loved me at that time, and she made me know it.

Pride of family and pride of wealth put me as far off from her in my Lady's eyes as if I had been some domesticated creature of another kind. But they could not put me further from her than I put myself when I set my merits against hers. More than that. They could not put me, by millions of fathoms, half so low beneath her as I put myself when in imagination I took advantage of her noble trustfulness, took the fortune that I knew she must possess in her own right, and left her to find herself in the zenith of her beauty and genius, bound to poor rusty plodding Me.

No. Worldliness should not enter here, at any cost. If I had tried to keep it out of other ground, how much harder was I bound to try to keep it from this sacred place.

But there was something daring in her broad generous character that demanded at so delicate a crisis to be delicately and patiently addressed. After many and many a bitter night (O I found

I could cry, for reasons not purely physical, at this pass of my life!) I took my course.

My Lady had in our first interview unconsciously over-stated the accommodation of my pretty house. There was room in it for only one pupil. He was a young gentleman near coming of age, very well connected, but what is called a poor relation. His parents were dead. The charges of his living and reading with me were defrayed by an uncle, and he and I were to do our utmost together for three years towards qualifying him to make his way. At this time he had entered into his second year with me. He was well-looking, clever, energetic, enthusiastic, bold; in the best sense of the term, a thorough young Anglo-Saxon.

I resolved to bring these two together.

NINTH CHAPTER.

SAID I, one night, when I had conquered myself: "Mr. Granville:" Mr. Granville Wharton his name was: "I doubt if you have ever yet so much as seen Miss Fareway."

"Well, sir," returned he, laughing, "you see her so much yourself, that you hardly leave another fellow a chance of seeing her."

"I am her tutor, you know," said I.

And there the subject dropped for that time. But I so contrived, as that they should come together shortly afterwards. I had previously so contrived as to keep them asunder, for while I loved her—I mean before I had determined on my sacrifice—a lurking jealousy of Mr. Granville lay within my unworthy breast.

It was quite an ordinary interview in the Fareway Park; but they talked easily together for some time; like takes to like, and they had many points of resemblance. Said Mr. Granville to me, when he and I sate at our supper that night: "Miss Fareway is remarkably beautiful, sir, and remarkably engaging. Don't you think so?"—"I think so," said I. And I stole a glance at him, and saw that he had reddened and was thoughtful. I remember it most vividly, because the mixed feeling of grave pleasure and acute pain that the slight circumstance caused me, was the first of a long, long series of such mixed impressions under which my hair turned slowly grey.

I had not much need to feign to be subdued, but I counterfeited to be older than I was, in all respects (Heaven knows, my heart being all too young the while!), and feigned to be more of a recluse and bookworm than I had really become, and gradually set up more and more of a fatherly manner towards Adelina. Likewise, I made my tuition less imaginative than before; separated myself from my poets and philosophers; was careful to present them in their own light, and me, their lowly servant, in my own shade. Moreover, in the matter of apparel I was equally mindful. Not that I had ever been dapper that way, but that I was slovenly now.

As I depressed myself with one hand, so did I labour to raise Mr. Granville with the other; directing his attention to such subjects as I too well knew most interested her, and fashioning him (do not deride or misconstrue the expression, unknown reader of this writing, for I have suffered!) into a greater resemblance to myself in my solitary one strong aspect. And gradually, gradually, as I saw him take more and more to these thrown-out lures of mine, then did I come to know better and better that love was drawing him on, and was drawing Her from me.

So passed more than another year; every day a year in its number of my mixed impressions of grave pleasure and acute pain; and then, these two being of age and free to act legally for themselves, came before me, hand in hand (my hair being now quite white), and entreated me that I would unite them together. "And indeed, dear Tutor," said Adelina, "it is but consistent in you that you should do this thing for us, seeing that we should never have spoken together that first time but for you, and that but for you we could never have met so often afterwards." The whole of which was literally true, for I had availed myself of my many business attendances on, and conferences with, my Lady, to take Mr. Granville to the house, and leave him in the outer room with Adelina.

I knew that my Lady would object to such a marriage for her daughter, or to any marriage that was other than an exchange of her for stipulated lands, goods, and moneys. But, looking on the two, and seeing with full eyes that they were both young and beautiful; and knowing that they were alike in the tastes and acquirements that will outlive youth and beauty; and considering that Adelina had a fortune now, in her own keeping; and considering further that Mr. Granville, though for the present poor, was of a good family that had never lived in a cellar in Preston; and believing that their love would endure, neither having any great discrepancy to find out in the other; I told them of my readiness to do this thing which Adelina asked of her dear Tutor, and to send them forth, Husband and Wife, into the shining world with golden gates that awaited them.

It was on a summer morning that I rose before the sun, to compose myself for the crowning of my work with this end. And my dwelling being near to the sea, I walked down to the rocks on the shore, in order that I might behold the sun rise in his majesty.

The tranquillity upon the Deep and on the firmament, the orderly withdrawal of the stars, the calm promise of coming day, the rosy suffusion of the sky and waters, the ineffable splendour that then burst forth, attuned my mind afresh after the discords of the night. Methought that all I looked on said to me, and that all I heard in the sea and in the air said to me: "Be comforted, mortal, that thy life is so short. Our preparation for what is to follow, has endured, and shall endure, for unimaginable ages."

I married them. I knew that my hand was cold when I placed it on their hands clasped together; but the words with which I had to accompany the action, I could say without faltering, and I was at peace.

They being well away from my house and

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from the place, after our simple breakfast, the time was come when I must do what I had pledged myself to them that I would do: break the intelligence to my Lady.

I went up to the house, and found my Lady in her ordinary business-room. She happened to have an unusual amount of commissions to entrust to me that day, and she had filled my hands with papers before I could originate a word.

"My Lady"—I then began, as I stood beside her table.

"Why, what's the matter!" she said, quickly, looking up.

"Not much, I would fain hope, after you shall have prepared yourself, and considered a little."

"Prepared myself! And considered a little! You appear to have prepared *your*self but indifferently, anyhow, Mr. Silverman." This, mighty scornfully, as I experienced my usual embarrassment under her stare.

Said I, in self-extenuation, once for all: "Lady Fareway, I have but to say for myself that I have tried to do my duty."

"For yourself?" repeated my Lady. "Then there are others concerned, I see. Who are they?"

I was about to answer, when she made towards the bell with a dart that stopped me, and said: "Why, where is Adelina!"

"Forbear. Be calm, my Lady. I married her this morning to Mr. Granville Wharton."

She set her lips, looked more intently at me than ever, raised her right hand and smote me hard upon the cheek.

"Give me back those papers, give me back those papers!" She tore them out of my hands and tossed them on her table. Then seating herself defiantly in her great chair, and folding her arms, she stabbed me to the heart with the unlooked-for reproach: "You worldly wretch!"

"Worldly?" I cried. "Worldly!"

"This, if you please," she went on with supreme scorn, pointing me out as if there were some one there to see: "this, if you please, is the disinterested scholar, with not a design beyond his books! This, if you please, is the simple creature whom any one could overreach in a bargain! This, if you please, is Mr. Silverman! Not of this world, not he! He has too much simplicity for this world's cunning. He has too much singleness of purpose to be a match for this world's double-dealing.—What did he give you for it?"

"For what? And who?"

"How much," she asked, bending forward in her great chair, and insultingly tapping the fingers of her right hand on the palm of her left: "how much does Mr. Granville Wharton pay you for getting him Adelina's money? What is the amount of your percentage upon Adelina's fortune? What were the terms of the agreement that you proposed to this boy when you, the Reverend George Silverman, licensed to marry, engaged to put him in possession of this girl? You made good terms for yourself, whatever they were. He would stand a poor chance against your keenness."

Bewildered, horrified, stunned, by this cruel perversion, I could not speak. But I trust that I looked innocent, being so.

"Listen to me, shrewd hypocrite," said my Lady, whose anger increased as she gave it utterance. "Attend to my words, you cunning schemer who have carried this plot through with such a practised double face that I have never suspected you. I had my projects for my daughter; projects for family connexion; projects for fortune. You have thwarted them, and overreached me; but I am not one to be thwarted and overreached, without retaliation. Do you mean to hold this Living, another month?"

"Do you deem it possible, Lady Fareway, that I can hold it another hour, under your injurious words?"

"Is it resigned then?"

"It was mentally resigned, my Lady, some minutes ago."

"Don't equivocate, sir. *Is* it resigned?"

"Unconditionally and entirely. And I would that I had never, never, come near it!"

"A cordial response from me to *that* wish, Mr. Silverman! But take this with you, sir. If you had not resigned it, I would have had you deprived of it. And though you have resigned it, you will not get quit of me as easily as you think for. I will pursue you with this story. I will make this nefarious conspiracy of yours, for money, known. You have made money by it, but you have, at the same time, made an enemy by it. *You* will take good care that the money sticks to you; *I* will take good care that the enemy sticks to you."

Then said I, finally: "Lady Fareway, I think my heart is broken. Until I came into this room just now, the possibility of such mean wickedness as you have imputed to me, never dawned upon my thoughts. Your suspicions——"

"Suspicions. Pah!" said she indignantly. "Certainties."

"Your certainties, my Lady, as you call them; your suspicions, as I call them; are cruel, unjust, wholly devoid of foundation in fact. I can declare no more, except that I have not acted for my own profit or my own pleasure. I have not in this proceeding, considered myself. Once again, I think my heart is broken. If I have unwittingly done any wrong with a righteous motive, that is some penalty to pay."

She received this with another and a more indignant "Pah!" and I made my way out of her room (I think I felt my way out with my hands, although my eyes were open), almost suspecting that my voice had a repulsive sound, and that I was a repulsive object.

There was a great stir made, the Bishop was appealed to, I received a severe reprimand, and narrowly escaped suspension. For years a cloud hung over me, and my name was tarnished. But my heart did not break, if a broken heart involves death; for I lived through it.

They stood by me, Adelina and her husband, through it all. Those who had known me at College, and even most of those who had only known me there by reputation, stood by me too.

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Little by little, the belief widened that I was not capable of what was laid to my charge. At length, I was presented to a College-Living in a sequestered place, and there I now pen my Explanation. I pen it at my open window in the summer-time; before me, lying the churchyard, equal resting-place for sound hearts, wounded hearts, and broken hearts. I pen it for the relief of my own mind, not foreseeing whether or no it will ever have a reader.

ON THE WING.

Believing as I do in the probable origin of the whole human species from a single pair, I can fancy the first man, every time he witnessed the flight of a bird, asking his wife, "My love, why cannot we fly?" Angels or messengers—beings associated with the earliest traditions—are ideals of mankind flying. There is reason to believe that during the whole period in which the human family have been increasing from a single pair to nine hundred millions, men have been envying birds their powers of flight. "O that I had the wings of a dove," was probably far from being an original wish when uttered by the poetical King David. Dr. Chalmers, the pulpit orator, was enjoying, one summer day, a sail in a row boat off the granite cliffs of the coast of Buchan, Aberdeenshire. The blue rock-doves were flying about the cliffs, the puffins and cormorants were sitting upon the ledges, and, after watching the birds for a time, the orator exclaimed, "There, that cormorant is superior to me. He is free of three elements; I, of only one. Whilst I can only sit here, he has been flying in the air, and diving in the sea, and now he is again perched upon the rock."

The desire to fly in the air is probably as old as the desire to float upon the water. The aspiration has been preserved in the satire cast upon it. During the whole existence of man, Genius has been wishing to bestow the gift of flying upon the human family, and foolishness has been laughing at the wish.

> Each fool still hath an itching to deride,
> And fain would be upon the laughing side.

The fable of Dædalus and Icarus flying from Crete on wings made of gummed feathers, with the fate which befel Icarus when, soaring too high, he melted the wax of his wings and tumbled into the sea, is a satire by some representative of stolid waggery against the impersonations of manual and imitative art, which has done service on the side of stupidity from the most ancient times down to the present day.

> But *science'* battles once begun,
> Bequeath'd from *failing* sire to son,
> If vanquish'd oft, are always won.

The laughing-stock of to-day is the pedestal of to-morrow.

The coming generation will probably enjoy the fruition of this aspiration of mankind. Societies have for some years now been set up in Paris and London to enable men to fly. Materials, no doubt, exist in the British Museum library and in the Imperial Library of Paris for a history of the attempts made by mankind to solve the problem of floating on the air; but I can glance only at two points. In the last half of the eighteenth century, the assumed difficulty of breathing at great elevations was deemed a proof of the impossibility of sailing in air. An assumption of this kind may have strength enough to keep back a beneficial discovery or invention for centuries. This mischievous guess was dispelled by the observations of Lunardi, towards the end of the eighteenth century. James Kay, whose caricatures present striking portraits of the notabilities of Edinburgh at this time, exhibited "a group of aëronauts." He calls them "Fowls of a Feather." The caricature ridiculed "a balloon mania." James Tytler, a surgeon, chemist, aëronaut, littérateur, and poet, with gifts which brought him small profit, but which enabled him greatly to benefit other people—the editor of the second edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica—after failing in two attempts, ascended from Comely-gardens in a fire-balloon, stove and all, to a height of three hundred and fifty feet. The caricature represents Tytler, a slight keen-eyed man, as if addressing to the tall and graceful Lunardi, the central figure, the apostrophe:

> Ethereal traveller, welcome from the skies,
> Welcome to earth to feast our longing eyes.

The half-successful ascent of James Tytler occurred in 1784, and in the following year Vincent Lunardi frenzied the Scotch with admiration by shooting up like a rocket to a height of about three miles. The popularity of this hero was so great that ladies wore bonnets called lunardis; and the heroic enthusiasm was inside as well as outside their heads. Lunardi, in October, ascended in a grand and magnificent manner, in presence of some eighty thousand spectators, was wafted by different currents of air over forty miles of sea and ten of land, rose out of sight of sea and land, through and above snow-clouds, and when the barometer marked a pressure of eighteen inches and five-tenths, felt no difficulty in breathing. This fact, the refutation of an obstructive assumption, was the contribution of Vincent Lunardi to the science and art of flying. The peasants and shepherds who heard the trumpet of the descending aëronaut believed the day of judgment was come; but clergymen set the church bells ringing in his honour. The belles of the Caledonian hunt deemed his notice a distinction, and the wife of a laird mounted alone in his car. The pluck of Lunardi comes out in his reply to a gentleman who assured him, just before ascending, that the wind would assuredly blow him into the German Ocean: "Me no mind that; somebody will pick me up." And it happened that he was blown out to sea six miles, and fished out half dead.

Mr. James Glaisher has, in our own day, ascended twice as high as Signor Vincent Lunardi. The scientific results which he has obtained have not been negative, but positive. He has proved the comparative worthlessness of our wind-gauges, no doubt; but he has,

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moreover, shown that temperature does not descend, as was supposed, in ratios proportional to elevation, but goes down according to different ratios in different strata of air. On the 29th of May, 1866, Mr. Glaisher, by ascending and descending once before and once after sunset, obtained results strikingly contradictory to the old views, for he ascertained that after sunset the temperature rises at great elevations. Before sunset, at a height of six thousand one hundred feet, the temperature was twenty-seven degrees colder than at Greenwich; and after sunset, the temperature at six thousand two hundred feet was five degrees higher than before, whilst it had gone down two degrees at Greenwich.

Mr. James Glaisher found the balloon degraded to a sensational plaything, and he has restored it to science as a floating observatory. He is giving us real instead of conjectural knowledge of the aërial ocean. He has moreover, taken up the question of all ages and tribes, How may man, the naked featherless biped, fly?

The British Flying Society—I beg pardon, the Aëronautical Society of Great Britain—of which Mr. Glaisher is the treasurer, have asked naturalists to tell them, more clearly than they have yet been told, how birds and insects fly? "When we consider," says Mr. Glaisher, "that the act of flying is not a vital condition, but purely a mechanical action, and that the animal creation furnishes us with models of every size and form, from the minutest microscopic insect to the bird that soars for hours above the highest mountain range, it seems remarkable that no correct demonstration has ever been given of the combined principles upon which flight is performed, nor of the absolute force required to maintain that flight." The president of the society, the intelligent Duke of Argyll, is still more dissatisfied with the physiologists: "The mechanical principles upon which flight is achieved is a subject which has scarcely ever been investigated in a scientific spirit. In fact, you will see in our best works of science, by the most distinguished men, the account given of the anatomy of a bird is that a bird flies by inflating itself with warm air, by which it becomes buoyant like a balloon. The fact is, however, that a bird is never buoyant. A bird is immensely heavier than the air. We all know that the moment a bird is shot it falls to the earth; and it must necessarily do so, because one of the essential mechanical principles of flight is weight; without it there can be no momentum, and no motive force capable of moving through atmospheric currents."

These extracts are specimens of the way in which engineers and mechanicians call aloud to naturalists and physiologists for models upon which they may make machines, and after the models are obtained, the acknowledgments of the receivers are very seldom heard. There is no protection or copyright for physiological discocoveries. As for the remarks of the heroic air-sailor and the noble duke, they seem to show, I most respectfully submit, that they have not mastered the teachings of physiology on the subject of flight.

What is the physiological idea of a bird? "One of the most striking peculiarities of birds," say Siebold and Stannius, "is the *pneumaticity* of a greater or less number of the bones of which they are composed, that is to say, the absence of marrow in the diploïque (the spongy substance between the two tables of the skull), or the presence, in the interior of the bones, of canals which communicate by openings with the organs which receive air. Air penetrates by two ways into the cranial bones—through the Eustachian tube and the nostrils. It makes its way into the trunk and the extremities chiefly by the aërial pouches peculiar to this class of animals, which occupy the greater part of the visceral cavity, often extending even beyond it, and communicating by large openings through the bronchial tubes with the surface of the lungs; in the pelicans, as Owen as justly remarked, to the extremities of the femur and the wings."

Thus far Siebold and Stannius. The anatomist who examines birds of high or long flight finds bags, tubes, pipes, holes, receptacles for gas, inside them everywhere—in the skull, backbone, and tail, humerus and femur, and toes. The long wing-bones of the albatross are made into pipe-stalks. The inner frame of the bird is, then, viewed as a flying-machine, composed of gas-bags, gas-pipes, gas-holes, and crannies on which the joints and muscles, or ropes and pulleys, of the outside machinery work and play. Some birds (the Coraciadæ, or Toddies Rollers, &c.) have air-cells in their skins. The bones of birds are lighter than those of mammals. The poet, James Montgomery, viewed the skeleton of the large pelican with wonder:

> Their slender skeletons . . . .
> So delicately framed, and half transparent,
> That I have marvelled how a bird so noble,
> When in his full magnificent attire,
> With pinions wider than the king of vultures,
> And down elastic, thicker than the swan's,
> Should leave so small a cage of ribs to mark
> Where vigorous life had dwelt a hundred years.

The skin of birds is covered with innumerable gas-tubes, called feathers, which are held in sheaths and kept warm by their arrangement and their appendages of down and web.

Birds, no doubt, fall to the ground when shot; and there can be no doubt, also, of their floating like a buoy, or of their buoyancy. But it is not merely when dead that they fall to the ground. Captain Carmichael having taken a sooty albatross by the wings and pitched it over a rock, it fell like a stone, although it had several hundred feet of clear fall to recover itself in. Seals fall to the bottom, when shot, as birds fall to the ground. When seals enter the mouth of the river Don, in Aberdeenshire, the fishermen place nets across the river to prevent the bodies of the shot seals from being carried out to sea. Mr. Lloyd records that the Scandinavian seal-hunters place small buoys above the spot where a shot seal sinks; and Blomquist, an old hunter, told Mr. Lloyd that, if shot after exhaling, the seal goes down at

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once; but if after inhaling, it does not sink for some little time afterwards. The inhaled air delays the sinking. These facts prove that the floating in water and in air depends upon the inhaling of air. But a bird, we are told, when floating in the air, is still heavier—immensely heavier—than the air. There is a begging of the question here. We have no means of weighing a bird when floating in the air, and the physiologists go no further than to say that the bird, like the seal, is relatively lighter when full of air. Heavy birds cannot immediately rise on the wing. This is why the albatross fell down. The only free eagle I ever saw was sitting on the top of the ruins of a Highland castle, and, after allowing me to walk quite near it, the eagle took wing in a lubberly way, descending slowly towards the water of the loch before rising to fly over the mountain opposite. Mr. Wenham, author of a paper published by the Aëronautical Society, describes the rising of an eagle as he saw it in Egypt. The eagle let him approach within eighty yards without stirring. A few feet nearer, and then the eagle began to walk away with expanding but motionless wings. A charge of shot rattles upon his feathers. His walk increases to a run; his feet-marks, from digs, become long scratches of his claws, a run of full twenty yards being necessary to enable him to lighten his body, get up his steam, and inflate his gas-bags and pipes before he could, although spurred by shot, rise on the wing.

Pelicans, according to the same observer, also rise from the ground with difficulty. A specimen weighed twenty-one pounds, and the wings measured ten feet, from tip to tip. A flock of a hundred pelicans fly after a leader one by one, looking like a long undulating ribbon glistening under the sun in a cloudless sky. High up they float serenely, as if asleep, for hours, a few easy strokes a minute sufficing to sustain them at their level.

Seals we have seen float or sink as they have inhaled or exhaled air. Heavy birds require time before they can rise from the ground. Fish, I may add, have gas-bags to make them buoyant in water. Birds which are not built to hold much gas do not fly, and the powers of those that fly are proportional, and their modes of flight are in accordance with the ratios of their gaseousness and the plans of its distribution. Pigeons prove these propositions marvellously well. Pigeons differ in size, there being kinds little smaller than turkeys, and other species little larger than sparrows; whilst as regards flight, the carrier-pigeon can fly a mile in a couple of minutes, and the Manumea (Didunculus strigirostris) cannot fly out of the reach of cats. The Dodo is an extinct species of pigeon, because its structure, adapted for much flesh and little gas, made its body heavier than its wings could hoist into the air. The Duke of Argyll ascribes flight to the force of the downward strokes of the wings. If this were so, the powers of flight would be proportional to the areas of the wings, which is not the fact, for pheasants with large wings are comparatively poor flyers, while ducks, with comparatively small wings, are strong flyers. The wild duck has only seventy-two inches to the pound, or little more than half the wing surface it ought to have, according to Smeaton's Table of Resistances.* Carrier-pigeons, tumblers, and rollers behave differently, according to the differences of structure which distribute their gases, their internal gas-pipes, called bones, and their external gas-tubes, called feathers. The wings of the pigeon and the pelican have been objects of much admiration: the stiff hard front edge, the rigidity of the pen, the elasticity of the plume, and the webs, the adaptation of the edge for catching hold of the undisturbed layers of air, and of the concave shape of the wing, and wide spread of the feathers for obtaining a propelling push; and these peculiarities are most remarkable in the kinds of pigeons which can fly for eight hours at a stretch, at the rate of forty-five miles an hour. But the tumblers and rollers are not less remarkable than the carriers. Tumblers throw themselves backwards in the air sometimes, as if they were tying a knot or weaving braid or whiplash. The rollers are a variety of the pigeons who roll themselves down, or fall down heads over tails from the sky. They sometimes hurt themselves on striking the ground. Mr. Brent—an authority on the subject—says these pigeons tumble because their real does not coincide with their apparent centre of gravity. Indian jugglers throw balls up into the air, which whirl about, because they are weighted with lead at a particular spot inside. When the cerebellum of a pigeon has been removed, the bird loses its power of maintaining its equilibrium and regulating its movements. The tumbler falls backwards because its head is light and its body heavy. Every part of the carrier is long, and every part of the tumbler is short, beak, head, neck, body, wings, and tail. The tumbler has even one primary quill fewer than the carrier.

There is a kind of roller which rolls on the ground. The varieties called house-tumblers are merely tumblers which have tumbled until they have become unable to fly, and which when forced up fall topsy turvy once or twice and then settle down again. Mr. Brent says, if tossed in a handkerchief, they will tumble over every time they feel it descend. But the Lowtans of India can be made to roll heads over tails on the ground. The filliped Lowtan is rubbed on the head, and then on getting a fillip it will roll on the ground until taken up. There is a knack which only the initiated know in making them roll. A Mussulman policeman, on being told to make one tumble, placed his hand on the back, put his first and second fingers on either side of the neck, and shook the bird four or five times sideways. When put on the ground, the Lowtan "rolled backwards so quickly that the eye could not follow it." "After what I judged to be a dozen tumbles" says the reporter of the scene, "he took it up and breathed upon its head (why, I know not),

* See Mr. Wenham's calculations.

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when it appeared as well as possible, and pecked about." The Lowtans which roll when filliped are reckoned higher caste than those which require to be shaken.

The explanation of all these facts is easy, if we remember that all tumblers are pigeons artificially stunted, whose centre of gravity has been disturbed. When their heads are filliped, rubbed, or heated, the cranial gases are dilated, and the light-headed bird loses its balance. The Lowtans have long pointed wings, and yet they can barely fly, not from any deficiency of wing surface, or of gaseous lightness, but for want of such a distribution of the gases as will enable them to keep their balance, and regulate their movements.

Spiders fly without wings. Some spiders wrap themselves up in silken bags and float through the air in great numbers. There is a tiny black spider, very common on the Sussex coast, which flies about floated by a filament, as a boy swims floated by a string of bladders. Wings, therefore, are not essential to flying; but a certain proportional lightness is essential. A boy does not need bladders to float in water, he only needs to know how to maintain his balance; but a spider seems to require its thread, as a bird requires a gaseous structure and wing surface.

The wings and the tails of birds have their shares in flying; but they are not essential to the act. Ducks fly, as we have seen, in saucy contradiction to Smeaton's rule of Atmospheric Resistances; the area is generally proportional to the weight—a square foot to a pound weight—and, moreover, the contour of many flying birds comes near to the contour of Newton's solid of least resistance. A man and a parachute properly poised, and weighing one hundred and forty-three pounds may descend safely. Birds and insects can at will expand or contract their resisting surfaces. They can also, by exercise and rest, warm or cool, weight or lighten their gases. The Cingalese hornbills in flying strike the air several strokes with their wings, and then stretching them out, sail for several yards, throwing their heads as far forward as their long necks permit. The hornbills have gas stowed away everywhere; and the screamers, or kamichi, are similarly gaseous, although for a different purpose. The kamichi walk upon the broad leaves of aquatic plants. Long ago, naturalists and physiologists have shown that the birds of strongest and swiftest flight have the longest and narrowest wings. Yet this fact is by some folks spoken of as a new discovery! Wings spread wide to sustain weight, on the principle of snow-shoes and broad wheels; wings have hard front edges to catch hold of successive wingfuls of air, as oars catch hold of water; wings have some breadth to push, like paddles; wings are often rather narrow, and it is found that two blades one-sixth of the circle each make the best screw-propellers for ships; wings are smooth, and the smoothness adapts them, like skates on ice, to glide along upon the layers of air. Two qualities of the air must not be overlooked by students of flight. The globules of the air are elastic. When struck by the downward stroke of the elastic wing, the elastic air pulses up again. Air, never still, being composed of heavier or lighter globules, always seeking their level, and varying their pressure, has such variations as currents, breezes, gales, hurricanes. Observers of the arrivals and departures of birds know the winds which will bring them or take them. Prior to leaving for warmer climes, our summer visitants assemble in flocks on the coast of Sussex, just as, fifty years ago, tourists used to collect and wait at Dover for a favourable wind to waft the packet across to Calais. The wings of a pelican, as I before stated, weighing twenty-one pounds may be ten feet from tip to tip; the wings of the albatross are only eight and a half inches broad, although fifteen feet long. The albatross moves these wings so little that it is said to sleep in the storm. But it is not necessary to try to explain this buoyancy by the lifting power of these machines. By rapid motions of his wings, the lark sustains himself above his mate in her nest; by rapid motions of his wings, the humming-bird can sustain himself in one spot until he darts out his tongue and catches an insect, or the humming-bird moth until its trump snatches pollen from the flower, and their increased activity of wing measures the greater muscular force necessary to maintain a stationary as compared with a gliding position. Light screws rapidly moved can mount short distances for brief spaces in the air. But the pelican and the albatross require not, and make not, any such rapid motions with their wings; for they have, in addition to gas in their osseous frame, gas in interclavicular cells, gas in thoracic cells, gas in abdominal cells, gas in pelvic cells, gas in intermuscular cells; and these cells communicate with subcutaneous cells of gas all over the surface of their bodies.

To resume. Flying, we have seen, can be done without wings, and without mechanical force. Flight consists of two things, buoyancy and waftage; and without saying that wings have nothing to do with buoyancy, and lightness nothing to do with waftage, it may be submitted that buoyancy (like that of a balloon) depends on gaseous structure, and waftage on the mechanism of wings; flying being the combination of the two as guided by the instinct or will of a bird.

ANCIENT GUIDES TO SERVICE.

Politeness among our ancestors was handsomely defined in all its departments by a variety of little books of etiquette, written in verse, for the use of children generally, pages in great men's houses, chamberlains of royal households, and others who were expected to do things precisely as they should be done. A bundle of such books has been reprinted for the Early English Text Society—a busy printing-club which is laying down, with good metal, a broad and easy highway of communication between us and our forefathers.

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This, for example, was the duty of young people who wished to behave prettily four hundred years ago, as set forth in two or three little books of etiquette. The disciples are those youths of gentle blood who were usually placed as pages in great houses. When they first enter their lord's place in the morning, let them come in, not with a rush, but at an easy pace, say "God speed," hold up their heads, salute their lord on one knee, and look straight into the face of any one who speaks to them, until he has done speaking; then answer shortly and to the point; for many words are right tedious. The youth must stand upright, without scratching himself or leaning against a post, till he is asked to sit; then cross his mouth before eating, converse cheerfully and quietly without ill talk, and, if any one command him, let him stand up and return his thanks. Let the page be prompt to carry the cup or hold lights to his lord or lady, hold clean water and napkin for his lord to wash before he goes to dinner. He is to keep his knife sharp, and, when he dines himself, to cut his bread, not break it, and to put none in his pocket; let him also, without noise, eat his soup with a spoon, not sup it with his mouth, and see that he do not leave his spoon in the dish. He is not to lean on the tablecloth so as to dirty it, nor to wipe his nose on it, nor to hold his head over his dish, nor pick his ears, nose, nails, or teeth, nor scratch his head, at meals, nor fill his mouth with more than he can hold in it while speaking.

He is to wipe his mouth and hands on a cloth before drinking, that he may not make the cup dirty; and he is to take salt with his knife, not dip his meat into the saltcellar; nor put his knife into his mouth, nor blow on his food. Let him taste with his fingers of every dish that is set before him, and when one is removed he must not ask for it again. He must not throw his bones on the floor, but lay them neatly on his trencher. Let him have also a clean trencher and a clean knife for his cheese, and when the meal is over let him clean his knives and put them up, keep his seat till he has washed, and wash without spitting in the basin; then go and stand before his lord till grace is said; after which one fetches for his lord the basin, one the cloth, and one pours water over his hands. Among several things noticeable enough to need no comment, we may find in these directions the origin of the horror still felt in all good society at sight of a man who puts his knife into his mouth. It comes down from the time when a man used his own knife in the dish that might be passed to others, and dipped it at will into the common saltcellar.

Now, let us hear what counsel a good woman, who lived in the polite world of four hundred years ago, or more, gave to her daughter. "Daughter," she said, "if you would be a wife, don't stay away from church when it rains, say your prayers, and don't gossip or laugh scornfully at old people or young. If any man offer to wed you, do not scorn him, whatsoever he be, but ask advice of your friends. Love, honour, and be meek to the man you marry, and you shall be his dear darling. Don't laugh too loudly, or walk too fast, or toss about your head, and do not be apt to swear; and when you have taken your cloth to market, do not spend the money it brings at the tavern. Drink moderately where good ale is being served; it will be a shame to you if you are often drunk. For they that be often drunk, thrift is from them sunk, my dear child. Do not frequent wrestlings, or shootings at the cock; encourage no chance greetings, take no gifts; be not too bitter or too bonny with the people of your household; make them work, and treat them as they do well or ill, and, when time presses, work with your own hands. Keep your own keys, pay wages punctually; neither mock nor be jealous if you see your neighbour's wife in rich attire. If your children do amiss, don't scold;

> But take a smart rod, and beat 'em in a row
> Till they cry mercy, and be of their guilt aknowe.
> The dear child must have love,
> And ever the dearer the more,
> My dear child."

As soon as you have a daughter born, begin to gather fast for her dower; and marry her as soon as you are able, for maidens are unstable, my dear child."

But the fullest and most interesting book of the etiquette of our forefathers is that written, or adapted and endorsed, by John Russell, who was Usher in Chamber and Marshal in Hall to the good Duke Humphrey, of Gloucester, brother of King Henry the Fifth, and Protector of England, in the minority of his nephew, Henry the Sixth. After much suffering in those latter days from strife of faction and feud with his uncle, Cardinal Beaufort, Duke Humphrey was at last arrested for high treason, and two days afterwards found dead in his prison. John Russell tells us nothing of this; but only how his lord went to bed and got up, washed, dressed, and breakfasted, and gives us a good notion of what it would have been to dine with this Duke Humphrey.

As Mr. Russell rhymes his counsel, he must needs begin in the conventional fashion of his time with a May morning, and a rising out of bed and going to a forest. There he met a sad young idler, stalking deer. "Whom do you serve?" said Mr. Russell. "No one," said the sad young man, "and I wish myself out of the world; for when I sought service, because I could do nothing, every man said me nay." "Will you learn, if I teach you? Now, what would you like to be?" "A butler, sir, a chamberlain, or a good carver." Whereupon Mr. Russell begins instantly to tell him that a butler must love God, be true to his master, and have three sharp knives in his pantry. One is to chop loaves, one to pare them, and the third to scrape and smooth the trenchers. He is to give to his lord new bread, to the others at his table bread a day old, and have "all household bread three dayës old, so it is profitable." Four-day old bread is most convenient when it is to be used as a trencher.

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The butler is also to have an ivory planer wherewith to smooth the top of the salt. He must have for his wine-pipes two augurs, a gimlet, and a tap of boxwood; and he is told how to tap the wine, so that the lees do not rise. He is to serve fruits according to their season—plums, damsons, cherries, and grapes to be eaten fasting before dinner; but after dinner pears, nuts, strawberries, currants, pippins, caraway comfits, hard cheese, and preserves. After supper, roasted apples, pears, and blanch powder, which is a powder of sugar and spice; nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger—these are good for the stomach. Cream in the evening, and strawberries and whortleberries, and cold junket (which is a spoonmeat of cream, rosewater, and sugar) are hurtful, unless one take after them hard cheese, wafers, and hypocras. For the making of hypocras, a compound of sundry spices with red wine and sugar-candy, which should always be served with wafers, John Russell gives a long and particular receipt in verse. Beware, he says, of salads and green-meats. It is proper to eat almonds and hard cheese; but not more than half an ounce of it, after food that sets the teeth on edge; and a raw apple is the cure for the "fumosity" produced by divers drinks. The butler should look at his wines every night with a candle to see that they are not fermenting or leaking, and should wash the heads of the pipes every night with cold water.

There were as many wines drunk in the days of Agincourt as now, and the strongest were in most repute; the best being called in the old time Theologicum, because, when really good wine was desired, the monks were the men most likely to have it, and of them it was obtained. The theologic wine might be of any of the sorts then in repute: Vernage, a bright red wine, sweetish and rough, from Tuscany; Romney, which Russell calls Rompney, of Modene, so that it may have been grown near the Romagna, and not have been the Greek wine of Romania; Greek Malvoisie, or Malmsey, named from a town in the Bay of Epidaurus, and much grown in Candia; Claret, a white or red wine mixed with honey and spiced, somewhat in the manner of the hypocras; French Muscadels, or Bastards, made of wine blended with honey; Osay, of Portugal, if not of Alsace. There were these and many more, but the decided tendency to the blending of wines with sugar and spice perhaps indicates that they were not very well made, or in themselves too palatable. The butler was not to serve his ale till it was five days old, and not to give flat ale to any one: "it might bring many a man in disease during many a year." The ale of olden time was made with malt and water; beer being made with malt and hop and water, which little concoction John Taylor, the water poet, described as the natural drink of a Dutchman and the cause of his being fat, but used in England to the detriment of Englishmen, while by the use of ale they were made strong. In some parts of the west of England the old distinction is retained: the costlier brew of malt and hop goes by the name of beer, and ale is the name of a cheaper drink which has no hops in it. Steward John Russell now proceeds in detail to tell his pupil how to lay a cloth and wait at table, during which service he is not to claw at his back as if pricked by a flea, to blink with his eyes, pick his nose, and "lick not with thy tongue in a dish, a mote to have out."

The idle young man in the wood now asks the learned steward for some instruction in carving, and he gets it, after preliminary warning that everything indigestible is signified by the letters, F. R. S., which mean fat and fried, raw and rancid, salt and sour. Slices of venison should be served in furmity soup; from partridges carve the wing, and mince it small in syrup; capons and fat hens should have ale or wine poured over them, and the wing, before it is served, be minced into a sauce with hot spices. Of small birds, as quails, larks, or thrushes, serve the legs to your lord first, and afterwards the wings, if he desire them. Of fawn, serve first the kidney, then a rib; of pig, the shoulder first, and then a rib. Whatever meat is served should be cut into four strips, that your master may, without trouble, take each piece between his two fingers, and dip it in the sauce. Of the wings of large birds, serve in the sauce only three pieces at a time. Open meat pies at the top, above the rim of the crust; take teal or chicken out of their pie, mince them, and stir in gravy, that your lord may eat them with a spoon. John Russell sets his face against fried meat and new-fashioned confections, as bad for digestion; but he approves of apple fritters when hot, and does not object to the occasional dearness of cow-heel and calf's-foot used in jellies. In the way of sauces, he applauds mustard for brawn beef or salt mutton, verjuice (or juice of unripe grapes) for boiled capon, veal, chicken, or bacon; a sauce called chaudern (made of chopped liver and entrails boiled with blood, bread, wine, pepper, vinegar, cloves, and ginger) was to be eaten with cygnet and swan; garlic, vinegar, or pepper with roast beef or goose; ginger sauce with lamb, kid, pig, or fawn; but with pheasant, partridge, or coney they eat mustard and sugar; sugar and salt, with river water, is eaten with curlew; camelin, a sauce of currants, nuts, bread-crusts, cloves, ginger, and cinnamon, powdered and mixed with vinegar, is the sauce for egret, crane, and plover, bustard and shoveler, which is a sort of sea-gull. Salt and cinnamon are to be eaten with venison, and also with sparrows, woodcocks, martins, larks, thrushes, lapwings, quails, and snipes. Eat beavers' tails with pease porridge or furmity; dried herring, dressed with white sugar, is to be eaten with mustard; white herring, fresh, with salt and wine; salt salmon and conger are to be eaten with mustard; but serve sweet butter with salt fish, stock fish, or mackerel. Sauce plaice with wine or ale, and put vinegar and spice to roasted eels or lampreys. Shrimps to be picked from their scales, laid round a saucer, and so served with vinegar.

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By these and other instructions the idle young man in the wood is qualified to offer himself for the post of carver. And now, what if he should offer for the place of server, scutellarius, arranger of the dishes kept in the scutellery, or scullery? He must ascertain from the cook what dishes will be wanted, and for what they will be used; then the server has proper servants and marshals to see that none are stolen, and to deliver the dishes to his hand in the dining-hall, where it will be his own duty to place them on the table. This part of the subject we may close with John Russell's bills of fare for dinner with Duke Humphrey, on meat-day and fast-day.

Meat dinner.—First course: Boar's brawn and mustard, soups, beef, stewed mutton, swan and chaudern sauce, capon, pig, baked venison leche lombard (pork, chopped fine, with eggs, pepper, cloves, currants, dates, and sugar, boiled in a bladder, then cut into strips and served with a rich sauce), meat fritter and a subtilty, or centre ornament, exhibiting the salutation of the Virgin.

Second course: Two soups, blancmange of white meat, roast venison, kid, fawn, or coney, bustern, stork, crane, peacock, whole, with his tail-feathers, heron sew, partridge, woodcock, plover, egret, sucking rabbits, great birds, larks, sea-bream, cheesecakes, puff paste with amber jelly, poached fritters, and a subtilty or device, showing an Angel singing to Three Shepherds on a hill.

Third course: Almond cream, mameny (brawn of capons, pounded, with sugar, almond, and spice), curlew in broth, snipes, quails, sparrows, roast martins, perch in jelly, crayfish, little pies containing marrow, with ginger and sugar, baked quinces, and sage fritters, with a device showing the Virgin Mary and the Three Kings of Cologne.

The fish dinner is in four courses. Among the dainties of the first course are roast pike and a porpoise, with pease porridge; the ornament, a device of a wanton youth on a cloud, piping, who represents Spring. The second course includes John Dory in syrup, and roast lampreys; its subtilty, an angry warrior standing in fire, whose name is Summer. The third course includes almond cream, fresh sturgeon, perch in jelly, fresh herring, shrimps, and periwinkles; the subtilty, a man with a sickle by a weed-grown river, representing Autumn, or the third age of man. The fourth course is of fruit, and includes hot apples and pears, with sugar-candy, wafers, and hypocras. The device represents Winter, feeble and old, with grey locks and heavy of cheer, sitting on a stone. To each of the four devices there should be a Latin inscription. They represent also the four humours of men—sanguine, choleric, phlegmatic, and melancholic.

A meat dinner for a franklin or country gentleman, who holds his land immediately of the king, opens with brawn and mustard, bacon and peas, beef or mutton stewed, boiled chicken, roast goose, pig, or capon, and custard, as the season suits. For the second course, meats pounded, and mixed with grated bread, egg, herb, and spice; then veal, lamb, kid, or coney, roast chicken or pigeon, with pies, cheese-cakes, and fritters. Then spiced apples and pears, with bread and cheese, spiced cakes and wafers, with bragot and mead. Bragot was made of ale, honey, and spice fermented; mead, of course, by fermenting honey and water.

Such counsel having much edified the Idle Young Man so far, his thirst of knowledge causes him to ask what he would have to do were he a chamberlain. Well, he would have to be clean, avoid holes in his clothes, be careful about fire and candle, have always a cheerful face to show his master. He must see that his lord has his clean shirt, that his breeches are well brushed, his socks not lost, and his slippers as brown as a water-leech. Before his master gets up in the morning, he must warm his linen for him at a fire without smoke, place for him a chair before the fire, with a cushion on it and a foot-cushion before it, spread a sheet over the chair and cushions, and see that he has his lord's comb and kerchief ready. Then sweetly invite him to the fire, put on him his undercoat, his doublet, and his stomacher, well warmed, his socks and his breeches, trussing them up to his pleasure; then lace every hole of his doublet, put a kerchief upon his shoulder, and proceed with an ivory comb to comb his head; then also wash his hands and his face with warm water. Then kneel and say to your sovereign, "Sir, what robe or gown pleaseth it you to wear to-day?" Bring that which he asks for, and hold it broad for him to put on. Arrange his girdle, set his garment goodly, take him his head-cloak or hat; but before he goes brush busily about him, and see that all be clean, whether he wear satin, silk, or velvet, scarlet or green. Before he goes to church, see that cushion, carpet, and curtain, beads and book, are ready in his pew; then return to his bedroom, throw the clothes off the bed, beat the feather bed, and see that the fustian and sheets are clean, make the bed, cover with a coverlet, lay carpets round, dress windows and cupboards with carpet and cushion, have a good fire laid. King Henry the Seventh, by the way, had an ermine counterpane, and ermine spread over his pillows, and after the ceremony of making his bed, all the esquires, ushers, and others present had bread, ale, and wine, outside the chamber.

If your sovereign, says John Russell, should desire more than washing of his hands and face, this is the way to give him a bath. Have sheets full of sweet green herbs and flowers hung round about the roof. Let him sit on a great sponge with a sheet over it, and have five or six sponges to lean upon, as well as a sponge under his feet. Take a basin of hot fresh herbs, and with a soft sponge then rinse him with warm rose-water, put on his socks and slippers, that he may stand by the fire on his foot-sheet to be wiped dry, then put him to bed.

But the Usher or Marshal must know every estate after its degree, and be able to place all men in the right order of their rank. He must know that a Protonotary may sit, three to a mess, with a Doctor of Divinity and a Pope's

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Legate, and that an ex-Mayor of London ranks with a Serjeant-at-law, but that these, being of a degree lower than D.D., may be placed, four to a mess, with a Preacher and a Master of Chancery. Sometimes a Marshal is puzzled because when a lord of royal blood is poor another lord is rich; but blood takes precedence of property, for the lord of blood royal may come to be king. But the parents of a Pope or Cardinal must not pretend equality with their son, or wish to sit by him. They must be served in a separate chamber. Tasting, for fear of poison, is a service paid to no person below the rank of Earl. This trust is committed to all the officers in attendance, who are sworn by a great oath; therefore let every officer keep close house, chest, and pantry, lest ill tricks be played him. The Idle Young Man in the wood has now received his lesson, and is very much obliged to Duke Humphrey's Steward. Now he will not be afraid to serve in offices to which before he had not ventured to aspire.

John Russell's curious details give us a picture of old manners in their most luxurious form, but suggests that, even in king's houses the standard of cleanliness was low. With all the profusion of viands, too, stomachs appear to have had many difficulties to contend with. The form of some of the directions, not here quoted, rather inclines one to believe that our forefathers, in their draughty, smoky, and uncomfortable houses, suffered much more generally than we do now-a-days from cold in the head. As to the use of fingers in their dishes, table-forks, it is well known, did not come into use till the beginning of the seventeenth century. In Coryat's Crudities, published in sixteen hundred and eleven, there is comment upon the strange use of forks in Italy. "I observed," says Coryat, "a custom in all those Italian cities and town through the which I passed, that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels, neither do I think that any other nations of Christendom doth use it, but only Italy. The Italian and also most strangers that are there commorant in Italy do always at their meals use a little fork when they cut their meat." In James the First's time it became one mark of an exquisite that he carried his small fork about with him; and Ben Jonson, in one of his plays, makes a character speak of his pains at court to get a patent for his project for "the laudable use of forks, brought into custom here as they are in Italy, to the sparing of napkins." They were to be "of gold and silver for the better personages, and of steel for the common sort."

Mr. Furnivall, who has made for the Early English Text Society this curious collection of old books of etiquette, adds one or two pieces of later counsel, from Andrew Borde, Sir John Harrington, and others. Andrew Borde, in the year of Queen Elizabeth's accession, advises a man who would sleep after dinner to do so standing upright against a cupboard. In bed it was thought best to lie first on the right side, "because the meat may come to the liver, which is to the stomach as a fire under the pot, and thereby is digested." To help to keep the digestive pot warm, people of weak digestion were advised to sleep with their hands upon their stomachs. The nightcap and the under-coat worn over the shirt were to be scarlet, probably because that passed for a warm colour. The neck was always to be kept warm, and in summer it was held advisable to wear goat-skin gloves perfumed with ambergris. Dr. William Vaughan, in the year sixteen hundred and two, discovered that a nightcap ought to have a hole in the top, through which the vapour may go out. Sir John Harrington recommends that, on rising in the morning in summer-time, one should wash with clean pure water; but in the winter, instead of washing, if we understand him rightly, sit for a little while before an oak-wood fire. In washing, after combing the hair through forty times, the face was to be washed, but the neck only dry-rubbed with a coarse napkin. Garments of hart's-skin and calf-skin were to be worn in summer; wolf-skin and fox-skin was to be preferred in winter. One should wear always a ring with some precious stone for the sake of its occult virtues, and for the same reason sometimes put in the mouth crystal, silver, gold, or a pure sugar-candy.

It is mainly with the earlier time that we have been here making acquaintance, the days when a visitor at a great house left his arms with the porter at the gate; and if he found them within at meat, bowed left and right, and waited before the screen in the middle of the hall until the Marshal or Usher came, and gave him the seat proper to his dignity. Then he was served with the little loaf, which he was to cut into seven pieces while waiting until meat should be brought him; but of which bread it would be rude to eat any before his meat was placed before him. If he had left a horse in the stable, its day's allowance of food would be two armsful of hay and a peck of oats. In those days, not only did the butler taste of every wine presented to his lord, or to a guest of high estate, and the cook taste every dish before he sent it covered from the kitchen, to be tasted again by the steward when uncovered in the hall, but a cup of white wood was provided wherewith the Ewerer was required to taste the very water that was poured over the lord's hands; so little could men, by whose death others had much to gain, put faith in one another.

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BY CHARLES DICKENS,

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THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XVI.

We found my lady with no light in the room but the reading-lamp. The shade was screwed down so as to overshadow her face. Instead of looking up at us in her usual straightforward way, she sat close at the table, and kept her eyes fixed obstinately on an open book.

"Officer," she said, "is it important to the inquiry you are conducting, to know beforehand if any person now in this house wishes to leave it?"

"Most important, my lady."

"I have to tell you, then, that Miss Verinder proposes going to stay with her aunt, Mrs. Ablewhite, of Frizinghall. She has arranged to leave us the first thing to-morrow morning."

Sergeant Cuff looked at me. I made a step forward to speak to my mistress—and, feeling my heart fail me (if I must own it), took a step back again, and said nothing.

"May I ask your ladyship *when* Miss Verinder first thought of going to her aunt's?" inquired the Sergeant.

"About an hour since," answered my mistress.

Sergeant Cuff looked at me once more. They say old people's hearts are not very easily moved. *My* heart couldn't have thumped much harder than it did now, if I had been five-and-twenty again!

"I have no claim, my lady," says the Sergeant, "to control Miss Verinder's actions. All I can ask you to do is to put off her departure, if possible, till later in the day. I must go to Frizinghall myself to-morrow morning—and I shall be back by two o'clock, if not before. If Miss Verinder can be kept here till that time, I should wish to say two words to her—unexpectedly—before she goes."

My lady directed me to give the coachman her orders, that the carriage was not to come for Miss Rachel until two o'clock. "Have you more to say?" she asked of the Sergeant, when this had been done.

"Only one thing, your ladyship. If Miss Verinder is surprised at this change in the arrangements, please not to mention Me as being the cause of putting off her journey."

My mistress lifted her head suddenly from her book as if she was going to say something—checked herself by a great effort—and, looking back again at the open page, dismissed us with a sign of her hand.

"That's a wonderful woman," said Sergeant Cuff, when we were out in the hall again. "But for her self-control, the mystery that puzzles you, Mr. Betteredge, would have been at an end to-night."

At those words, the truth rushed at last into my stupid old head. For the moment, I suppose I must have gone clean out of my senses. I seized the Sergeant by the collar of his coat, and pinned him against the wall.

"Damn you!" I cried out, "there's something wrong about Miss Rachel—and you have been hiding it from me all this time!"

Sergeant Cuff looked up at me—flat against the wall—without stirring a hand, or moving a muscle of his melancholy face.

"Ah," he said, "you've guessed it at last."

My hand dropped from his collar, and my head sunk on my breast. Please to remember, as some excuse for my breaking out as I did, that I had served the family for fifty years. Miss Rachel had climbed upon my knees, and pulled my whiskers, many and many a time when she was a child. Miss Rachel, with all her faults, had been, to my mind, the dearest and prettiest and best young mistress that ever an old servant waited on, and loved. I begged Sergeant Cuff's pardon, but I am afraid I did it with watery eyes, and not in a very becoming way.

"Don't distress yourself, Mr. Betteredge," says the Sergeant, with more kindness than I had any right to expect from him. "In my line of life, if we were quick at taking offence, we shouldn't be worth salt to our porridge. If it's any comfort to you, collar me again. You don't in the least know how to do it; but I'll overlook your awkwardness in consideration of your feelings."

He curled up at the corners of his lips, and, in his own dreary way, seemed to think he had delivered himself of a very good joke.

I led him into my own little sitting-room, and closed the door.

"Tell me the truth, Sergeant," I said.

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"What do you suspect? It's no kindness to hide it from me now."

"I don't suspect," said Sergeant Cuff. "I know."

My unlucky temper began to get the better of me again.

"Do you mean to tell me, in plain English," I said, "that Miss Rachel has stolen her own Diamond?"

"Yes," says the Sergeant; "that is what I mean to tell you, in so many words. Miss Verinder has been in secret possession of the Moonstone from first to last; and she has taken Rosanna Spearman into her confidence, because she has calculated on our suspecting Rosanna Spearman of the theft. There is the whole case in a nutshell. Collar me again, Mr. Betteredge. If it's any vent to your feelings, collar me again."

God help me! my feelings were not to be relieved in that way. "Give me your reasons!" That was all I could say to him.

"You shall hear my reasons to-morrow," said the Sergeant. "If Miss Verinder refuses to put off her visit to her aunt (which you will find Miss Verinder will do), I shall be obliged to lay the whole case before your mistress to-morrow. And, as I don't know what may come of it, I shall request you to be present, and to hear what passes on both sides. Let the matter rest for to-night. No, Mr. Betteredge, you don't get a word more on the subject of the Moonstone out of me. There is your table spread for supper. That's one of the many human infirmities which I always treat tenderly. If you will ring the bell, I'll say grace. 'For what we are going to receive——'"

"I wish you a good appetite to it, Sergeant," I said. "*My* appetite is gone. I'll wait and see you served, and then I'll ask you to excuse me, if I go away, and try to get the better of this by myself."

I saw him served with the best of everything—and I shouldn't have been sorry if the best of everything had choked him. The head gardener (Mr. Begbie) came in at the same time, with his weekly account. The Sergeant got on the subject of roses and the merits of grass walks and gravel walks immediately. I left the two together, and went out with a heavy heart. This was the first trouble I remember for many a long year which wasn't to be blown off by a whiff of tobacco, and which was even beyond the reach of Robinson Crusoe.

Being restless and miserable, and having no particular room to go to, I took a turn on the terrace, and thought it over in peace and quietness by myself. It doesn't much matter what my thoughts were. I felt wretchedly old, and worn out, and unfit for my place—and began to wonder, for the first time in my life, when it would please God to take me. With all this, I held firm, notwithstanding, to my belief in Miss Rachel. If Sergeant Cuff had been Solomon in all his glory, and had told me that my young lady had mixed herself up in a mean and guilty plot, I should have had but one answer for Solomon, wise as he was, "You don't know her; and I do."

My meditations were interrupted by Samuel. He brought me a written message from my mistress.

Going into the house to get a light to read it by, Samuel remarked that there seemed a change coming in the weather. My troubled mind had prevented me from noticing it before. But, now my attention was roused, I heard the dogs uneasy, and the wind moaning low. Looking up at the sky, I saw the rack of clouds getting blacker and blacker, and hurrying faster and faster over a watery moon. Wild weather coming — Samuel was right, wild weather coming.

The message from my lady informed me, that the magistrate at Frizinghall had written to remind her about the three Indians. Early in the coming week, the rogues must needs be released, and left free to follow their own devices. If we had any more questions to ask them, there was no time to lose. Having forgotten to mention this, when she had last seen Sergeant Cuff, my mistress now desired me to supply the omission. The Indians had gone clean out of my head (as they have, no doubt, gone clean out of yours). I didn't see much use in stirring that subject again. However, I obeyed my orders on the spot, as a matter of course.

I found Sergeant Cuff and the gardener, with a bottle of Scotch whisky between them, head over ears in an argument on the growing of roses. The Sergeant was so deeply interested that he held up his hand, and signed to me not to interrupt the discussion, when I came in. As far as I could understand it, the question between them was, whether the white moss rose did, or did not, require to be budded on the dog rose to make it grow well. Mr. Begbie said, Yes; and Sergeant Cuff said, No. They appealed to me, as hotly as a couple of boys. Knowing nothing whatever about the growing of roses, I steered a middle course—just as her majesty's judges do, when the scales of justice bother them by hanging even to a hair. "Gentlemen," I remarked, "there is much to be said on both sides." In the temporary lull produced by that impartial sentence, I laid my lady's written message on the table, under the eyes of Sergeant Cuff.

I had got by this time, as nearly as might be, to hate the Sergeant. But truth compels me to acknowledge that, in respect of readiness of mind, he was a wonderful man.

In half a minute after he had read the message, he had looked back into his memory for Superintendent Seegrave's report; had picked out that part of it in which the Indians were concerned; and was ready with his answer. A certain great traveller, who understood the Indians and their language, had figured in Mr. Seegrave's report, hadn't he? Very well. Did I know the gentleman's name and address? Very well again. Would I write them on the back of my lady's message? Much obliged to

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me. Sergeant Cuff would look that gentleman up, when he went to Frizinghall in the morning.

"Do you expect anything to come of it?" I asked. "Superintendent Seegrave found the Indians as innocent as the babe unborn."

"Superintendent Seegrave has been proved wrong, up to this time, in all his conclusions," answered the Sergeant. "It may be worth while to find out to-morrow whether Superintendent Seegrave was wrong about the Indians as well." With that he turned to Mr. Begbie, and took up the argument again exactly at the place where it had left off. "This question between us is a question of soils and seasons, and patience and pains, Mr. Gardener. Now let me put it to you from another point of view. You take your white moss rose——"

By that time, I had closed the door on them, and was out of hearing of the rest of the dispute.

In the passage, I met Penelope hanging about, and asked what she was waiting for.

She was waiting for her young lady's bell, when her young lady chose to call her back to go on with the packing for the next day's journey. Further inquiry revealed to me, that Miss Rachel had given it as a reason for wanting to go to her aunt at Frizinghall, that the house was unendurable to her, and that she could bear the odious presence of a policeman under the same roof with herself no longer. On being informed, half an hour since, that her departure would be delayed till two in the afternoon, she had flown into a violent passion. My lady, present at the time, had severely rebuked her, and then (having apparently something to say, which was reserved for her daughter's private ear) had sent Penelope out of the room. My girl was in wretchedly low spirits about the changed state of things in the house. "Nothing goes right, father; nothing is like what it used to be. I feel as if some dreadful misfortune was hanging over us all."

That was my feeling too. But I put a good face on it, before my daughter. Miss Rachel's bell rang while we were talking. Penelope ran up the back stairs to go on with the packing. I went by the other way to the hall, to see what the glass said about the change in the weather.

Just as I approached the swing door leading into the hall from the servants' offices, it was violently opened from the other side; and Rosanna Spearman ran by me, with a miserable look of pain in her face, and one of her hands pressed hard over her heart, as if the pang was in that quarter. "What's the matter, my girl?" I asked, stopping her. "Are you ill?" "For God's sake, don't speak to me," she answered, and twisted herself out of my hands, and ran on towards the servants' staircase. I called to the cook (who was within hearing) to look after the poor girl. Two other persons proved to be within hearing, as well as the cook. Sergeant Cuff darted softly out of my room, and asked what was the matter. I answered, "Nothing." Mr. Franklin, on the other side, pulled open the swing-door, and beckoning me into the hall, inquired if I had seen anything of Rosanna Spearman.

"She has just passed me, sir, with a very disturbed face, and in a very odd manner."

"I am afraid I am innocently the cause of that disturbance, Betteredge."

"You, sir!"

"I can't explain it," says Mr. Franklin; but, if the girl *is* concerned in the loss of the Diamond, I do really believe she was on the point of confessing everything—to me, of all the people in the world—not two minutes since."

Looking towards the swing-door, as he said those last words, I fancied I saw it opened a little way from the inner side.

Was there anybody listening? The door fell to before I could get to it. Looking through, the moment after, I thought I saw the tails of Sergeant Cuff's respectable black coat disappearing round the corner of the passage. He knew, as well as I did, that he could expect no more help from me, now that I had discovered the turn which his investigations were really taking. Under those circumstances, it was quite in his character to help himself, and to do it by the underground way.

Not feeling sure that I had really seen the Sergeant—and not desiring to make needless mischief, where, Heaven knows, there was mischief enough going on already—I told Mr. Franklin that I thought one of the dogs had got into the house—and then begged him to describe what had happened between Rosanna and himself.

"Were you passing through the hall, sir?" I asked. "Did you meet her accidently, when she spoke to you?"

Mr. Franklin pointed to the billiard-table.

"I was knocking the balls about," he said, "and trying to get this miserable business of the Diamond out of my mind. I happened to look up—and there stood Rosanna Spearman at the side of me, like a ghost! Her stealing on me in that way was so strange that I hardly knew what to do at first. Seeing a very anxious expression in her face, I asked her if she wished to speak to me. She answered, 'Yes, if I dare.' Knowing what suspicion attached to her, I could only put one construction on such language as that. I confess it made me uncomfortable. I had no wish to invite the girl's confidence. At the same time, in the difficulties that now beset us, I could hardly feel justified in refusing to listen to her, if she was really bent on speaking to me. It was an awkward position; and I dare say I got out of it awkwardly enough. I said to her, "I don't quite understand you. Is there anything you want me to do?" Mind, Betteredge, I didn't speak unkindly! The poor girl can't help being ugly—I felt that, at the time. The cue was still in my hand, and I went on knocking the balls about, to take off the awkwardness of the thing. As it turned out, I only made matters worse still. I'm afraid I mortified her without meaning it! She suddenly turned away. "He looks

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at the billiard balls," I heard her say. "Anything rather than look at *me!*" Before I could stop her, she had left the hall. I am not quite easy about it, Betteredge. Would you mind telling Rosanna that I meant no unkindness? I have been a little hard on her, perhaps, in my own thoughts—I have almost hoped that the loss of the Diamond might be traced to *her*. Not from any ill-will to the poor girl; but——" He stopped there, and going back to the billiard-table, began to knock the balls about once more.

After what had passed between the Sergeant and me, I knew what it was that he had left unspoken as well as he knew it himself.

Nothing but the tracing of the Moonstone to our second housemaid could now raise Miss Rachel above the infamous suspicion that rested on her in the mind of Sergeant Cuff. It was no longer a question of quieting my young lady's nervous excitement; it was a question of proving her innocence. If Rosanna had done nothing to compromise herself, the hope which Mr. Franklin confessed to having felt would have been hard enough on her in all conscience. But this was not the case. She had pretended to be ill, and had gone secretly to Frizinghall. She had been up all night, making something, or destroying something, in private. And she had been at the Shivering Sand, that evening, under circumstances which were highly suspicious, to say the least of them. For all these reasons (sorry as I was for Rosanna) I could not but think that Mr. Franklin's way of looking at the matter was neither unnatural nor unreasonable, in Mr. Franklin's position. I said a word to him to that effect.

"Yes, yes!" he said in return. "But there is just a chance—a very poor one, certainly—that Rosanna's conduct may admit of some explanation which we don't see at present. I hate hurting a woman's feelings, Betteredge! Tell the poor creature what I told you to tell her. And if she wants to speak to me—I don't care whether I get into a scrape or not—send her to me in the library." With those kind words he laid down the cue and left me.

Inquiry at the servants' offices informed me that Rosanna had retired to her own room. She had declined all offers of assistance with thanks, and had only asked to be left to rest in quiet. Here, therefore, was an end of any confession on her part (supposing she really had a confession to make) for that night. I reported the result to Mr. Franklin, who, thereupon, left the library, and went up to bed.

I was putting the lights out, and making the windows fast, when Samuel came in with news of the two guests whom I had left in my room. The argument about the white moss-rose had apparently come to an end at last. The gardener had gone home, and Sergeant Cuff was nowhere to be found in the lower regions of the house.

I looked into my room. Quite true—nothing was to be discovered there but a couple of empty tumblers and a strong smell of hot grog. Had the Sergeant gone of his own accord to the bed-chamber that was prepared for him? I went up-stairs to see.

After reaching the second landing, I thought I heard a sound of quiet and regular breathing on my left-hand side. My left-hand side led to the corridor which communicated with Miss Rachel's room. I looked in, and there, coiled up on three chairs placed right across the passage—there, with a red handkerchief tied round his grizzled head, and his respectable black coat rolled up for a pillow, lay and slept Sergeant Cuff!

He woke, instantly and quietly, like a dog, the moment I approached him.

"Good night, Mr. Betteredge," he said. "And mind, if you ever take to growing roses, the white moss-rose is all the better for *not* being budded on the dog-rose, whatever the gardener may say to the contrary!"

"What are you doing here?" I asked. "Why are you not in your proper bed?"

"I am not in my proper bed," answered the Sergeant, "because I am one of the many people in this miserable world who can't earn their money honestly and easily at the same time. There was a coincidence, this evening, between the period of Rosanna Spearman's return from the Sands and the period when Miss Verinder took her resolution to leave the house. Whatever Rosanna may have hidden, it's clear to my mind that your young lady couldn't go away until she knew that it *was* hidden. The two must have communicated privately once already to-night. If they try to communicate again, when the house is quiet, I want to be in the way, and stop it. Don't blame me for upsetting your sleeping arrangements, Mr. Betteredge—blame the Diamond."

"I wish to God the Diamond had never found its way into this house!" I broke out.

Sergeant Cuff looked with a rueful face at the three chairs on which he had condemned himself to pass the night.

"So do I," he said, gravely.

CHAPTER XVII.

NOTHING happened in the night; and (I am happy to add) no attempt at communication between Miss Rachel and Rosanna rewarded the vigilance of Sergeant Cuff.

I had expected the Sergeant to set off for Frizinghall the first thing in the morning. He waited about, however, as if he had something else to do first. I left him to his own devices; and going into the grounds shortly after, met Mr. Franklin on his favourite walk by the shrubbery side.

Before we had exchanged two words, the Sergeant unexpectedly joined us. He made up to Mr. Franklin, who received him, I must own, haughtily enough. "Have you anything to say to me?" was all the return he got for politely wishing Mr. Franklin good morning.

"I have something to say to you, sir," an-

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swered the Sergeant, "on the subject of the inquiry I am conducting here. You detected the turn that inquiry was really taking, yesterday. Naturally enough, in your position, you are shocked and distressed. Naturally enough, also, you visit your own angry sense of your own family scandal upon Me."

"What do you want?" Mr. Franklin broke in, sharply enough.

"I want to remind you, sir, that I have at any rate, thus far, not been *proved* to be wrong. Bearing that in mind, be pleased to remember, at the same time, that I am an officer of the law acting here under the sanction of the mistress of the house. Under these circumstances, is it, or is it not, your duty as a good citizen to assist me with any special information which you may happen to possess?"

"I possess no special information," says Mr. Franklin.

Sergeant Cuff put that answer by him, as if no answer had been made.

"You may save my time, sir, from being wasted on an inquiry at a distance," he went on, "if you choose to understand me and speak out."

"I don't understand you," answered Mr. Franklin; "and I have nothing to say."

"One of the female servants (I won't mention names) spoke to you privately, sir, last night."

Once more Mr. Franklin cut him short; once more Mr. Franklin answered, "I have nothing to say."

Standing by in silence, I thought of the movement in the swing-door, on the previous evening, and of the coat-tails which I had seen disappearing down the passage. Sergeant Cuff had, no doubt, just heard enough, before I interrupted him, to make him suspect that Rosanna had relieved her mind by confessing something to Mr. Franklin Blake.

This notion had barely struck me—when who should appear at the end of the shrubbery walk but Rosanna Spearman in her own proper person! She was followed by Penelope, who was evidently trying to make her retrace her steps to the house. Seeing that Mr. Franklin was not alone, Rosanna came to a standstill, evidently in great perplexity what to do next. Penelope waited behind her. Mr. Franklin saw the girls as soon as I saw them. The Sergeant, with his devilish cunning, took on not to have noticed them at all. All this happened in an instant. Before either Mr. Franklin or I could say a word, Sergeant Cuff struck in smoothly, with an appearance of continuing the previous conversation.

"You needn't be afraid of harming the girl, sir," he said to Mr. Franklin, speaking in a loud voice, so that Rosanna might hear him. "On the contrary, I recommend you to honour me with your confidence, if you feel any interest in Rosanna Spearman."

Mr. Franklin instantly took on not to have noticed the girls either. He answered, speaking loudly on his side:

"I take no interest whatever in Rosanna Spearman."

I looked towards the end of the walk. All I saw at the distance was that Rosanna suddenly turned round, the moment Mr. Franklin had spoken. Instead of resisting Penelope, as she had done the moment before, she now let my daughter take her by the arm and lead her back to the house.

The breakfast-bell rang as the two girls disappeared—and even Sergeant Cuff was now obliged to give it up as a bad job! He said to me quietly, "I shall go to Frizinghall, Mr. Betteredge; and I shall be back before two." He went his way, without a word more—and for some few hours we were well rid of him.

"You must make it right with Rosanna," Mr. Franklin said to me, when we were alone. "I seem to be fated to say or do something awkward, before that unlucky girl. You must have seen yourself that Sergeant Cuff laid a trap for both of us. If he could confuse *me*, or irritate *her* into breaking out, either she or I might have said something which would answer his purpose. On the spur of the moment, I saw no better way out of it than the way I took. It stopped the girl from saying anything, and it showed the Sergeant that I saw through him. He was evidently listening, Betteredge, when I was speaking to you last night."

He had done worse than listen, as I privately thought to myself. He had remembered my telling him that the girl was in love with Mr. Franklin; and he had calculated on *that* when he appealed to Mr. Franklin's interest in Rosanna—in Rosanna's hearing.

"As to listening, sir," I remarked (keeping the other point to myself), "we shall all be rowing in the same boat, if this sort of thing goes on much longer. Prying, and peeping, and listening are the natural occupations of people situated as we are. In another day or two, Mr. Franklin, we shall all be struck dumb together—for this reason that we shall all be listening to surprise each other's secrets, and all know it. Excuse my breaking out, sir. The horrid mystery hanging over us in this house gets into my head like liquor, and makes me wild. I won't forget what you have told me. I'll take the first opportunity of making it right with Rosanna Spearman."

"You haven't said anything to her yet about last night, have you?" Mr. Franklin asked.

"No, sir."

"Then say nothing now. I had better not invite the girl's confidence, with the Sergeant on the look-out to surprise us together. My conduct is not very consistent, Betteredge—is it? I see no way out of this business, which isn't dreadful to think of, unless the Diamond is traced to Rosanna. And yet I can't, and won't, help Sergeant Cuff to find the girl out."

Unreasonable enough, no doubt. But it was my state of mind as well. I thoroughly understood him. If you will, for once in your life, remember that you are mortal, perhaps you will thoroughly understand him too.

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The state of things, indoors and out, while Sergeant Cuff was on his way to Frizinghall, was briefly this:

Miss Rachel waited for the time when the carriage was to take her to her aunt's, still obstinately shut up in her own room. My lady and Mr. Franklin breakfasted together. After breakfast, Mr. Franklin took one of his sudden resolutions, and went out precipitately to quiet his mind by a long walk. I was the only person who saw him go; and he told me he should be back before the Sergeant returned. The change in the weather, foreshadowed over-night, had come. Heavy rain had been followed, soon after dawn, by high wind. It was blowing fresh as the day got on. But though the clouds threatened more than once, the rain still held off. It was not a bad day for a walk, if you were young and strong, and could breast the great gusts of wind which came sweeping in from the sea.

I attended my lady after breakfast, and assisted her in the settlement of our household accounts. She only once alluded to the matter of the Moonstone, and that was in the way of forbidding any present mention of it between us. "Wait till that man comes back," she said, meaning the Sergeant. "We *must* speak of it then: we are not obliged to speak of it now."

After leaving my mistress, I found Penelope waiting for me in my room.

"I wish, father, you would come and speak to Rosanna," she said. "I am very uneasy about her."

I suspected what was the matter readily enough. But it is a maxim of mine that men (being superior creatures) are bound to improve women—if they can. When a woman wants me to do anything (my daughter, or not, it doesn't matter), I always insist on knowing why. The oftener you make them rummage their own minds for a reason, the more manageable you will find them in all the relations of life. It isn't their fault (poor wretches!) that they act first, and think afterwards; it's the fault of the fools who humour them.

Penelope's reason why, on this occasion, may be given in her own words. "I'm afraid, father," she said, "Mr. Franklin has hurt Rosanna cruelly, without intending it."

"What took Rosanna into the shrubbery walk?" I asked.

"Her own madness," says Penelope; "I can call it nothing else. She was bent on speaking to Mr. Franklin, this morning, come what might of it. I did my best to stop her; you saw that. If I could only have got her away before she heard those dreadful words——"

"There! there!" I said, "don't lose your head. I can't call to mind that anything happened to alarm Rosanna."

"Nothing to alarm her, father. But Mr. Franklin said he took no interest whatever in her—and, oh, he said it in such a cruel voice!"

"He said it to stop the Sergeant's mouth," I answered.

"I told her that," says Penelope. "But you see, father (though Mr. Franklin isn't to blame), he's been mortifying and disappointing her for weeks and weeks past; and now this comes on the top of it all! She has no right, of course, to expect him to take any interest in her. It's quite monstrous that she should forget herself and her station in that way. But she seems to have lost pride, and proper feeling, and everything. She frightened me, father, when Mr. Franklin said those words. They seemed to turn her into stone. A sudden quiet came over her, and she has gone about her work, ever since, like a woman in a dream."

I began to feel a little uneasy. There was something in the way Penelope put it which silenced my superior sense. I called to mind, now my thoughts were directed that way, what had passed between Mr. Franklin and Rosanna overnight. She looked cut to the heart on that occasion; and now, as ill-luck would have it, she had been unavoidably stung again, poor soul, on the tender place. Sad! sad!—all the more sad because the girl had no reason to justify her, and no right to feel it.

I had promised Mr. Franklin to speak to Rosanna, and this seemed the fittest time for keeping my word.

We found the girl sweeping the corridor outside the bedrooms, pale and composed, and neat as ever in her modest print dress. I noticed a curious dimness and dulness in her eyes—not as if she had been crying, but as if she had been looking at something too long. Possibly, it was a misty something raised by her own thoughts. There was certainly no object about her to look at which she had not seen already hundreds on hundreds of times.

"Cheer up, Rosanna!" I said. "You mustn't fret over your own fancies. I have got something to say to you from Mr. Franklin."

I thereupon put the matter in the right view before her, in the friendliest and most comforting words I could find. My principles, in regard to the other sex, are, as you may have noticed, very severe. But somehow or other, when I come face to face with the women, my practice (I own) is not conformable.

"Mr. Franklin is very kind and considerate. Please to thank him." That was all the answer she made me.

My daughter had already noticed that Rosanna went about her work like a woman in a dream. I now added to this observation, that she also listened and spoke like a woman in a dream. I doubted if her mind was in a fit condition to take in what I had said to her.

"Are you quite sure, Rosanna, that you understand me?" I asked.

"Quite sure."

She echoed me, not like a living woman, but like a creature moved by machinery. She went on sweeping all the time. I took away the broom as gently and as kindly as I could.

"Come, come, my girl!" I said, "this is not like yourself. You have got something on your mind. I'm your friend—and I'll stand your friend, even if you have done wrong.

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Make a clean breast of it, Rosanna—make a clean breast of it!"

The time had been, when my speaking to her in that way would have brought the tears into her eyes. I could see no change in them now.

"Yes," she said, "I'll make a clean breast of it."

"To my lady?" I asked.

"No."

"To Mr. Franklin?"

"Yes; to Mr. Franklin."

I hardly knew what to say to that. She was in no condition to understand the caution against speaking to him in private, which Mr. Franklin had directed me to give her. Feeling my way, little by little, I only told her Mr. Franklin had gone out for a walk.

"It doesn't matter," she answered. "I shan't trouble Mr. Franklin, to-day."

"Why not speak to my lady?" I said. "The way to relieve your mind is to speak to the merciful and Christian mistress who has always been kind to you."

She looked at me for a moment with a grave and steady attention, as if she was fixing what I said in her mind. Then she took the broom out of my hands; and moved off with it slowly, a little way down the corridor.

"No," she said, going on with her sweeping, and speaking to herself; "I know a better way of relieving my mind than that."

"What is it?"

"Please to let me go on with my work."

Penelope followed her, and offered to help her.

She answered, "No. I want to do my work. Thank you, Penelope." She looked round at me. "Thank you, Mr. Betteredge."

There was no moving her—there was nothing more to be said. I signed to Penelope to come away with me. We left her, as we had found her, sweeping the corridor, like a woman in a dream.

"This is a matter for the doctor to look into," I said. "It's beyond me."

My daughter reminded me of Mr. Candy's illness, owing (as you may remember) to the chill he had caught on the night of the dinner-party. His assistant—a certain Mr. Ezra Jennings—was at our disposal, to be sure. But nobody knew much about him in our parts. He had been engaged by Mr. Candy, under rather peculiar circumstances; and, right or wrong, we none of us liked him or trusted him. There were other doctors at Frizinghall. But they were strangers to our house; and Penelope doubted, in Rosanna's present state, whether strangers might not do her more harm than good.

I thought of speaking to my lady. But, remembering the heavy weight of anxiety which she already had on her mind, I hesitated to add to all the other vexations this new trouble. Still, there was a necessity for doing something. The girl's state was, to my thinking, downright alarming—and my mistress ought to be informed of it. Unwillingly enough, I went to her sitting-room. No one was there. My lady was shut up with Miss Rachel. It was impossible for me to see her till she came out again.

I waited in vain till the clock on the front staircase struck the quarter to two. Five minutes afterwards, I heard my name called, from the drive outside the house. I knew the voice directly. Sergeant Cuff had returned from Frizinghall.

LOCOMOTION IN LONDON.

Forty-two years are but a small space of time in the history of a great nation or a great city, though they form a large slice in the life of a man who scarcely hopes to live beyond seventy. But forty-two years, short as they are, have operated very great changes in the huge assemblage of cities, boroughs, towns, and villages, which is called the British metropolis. In the year 1826 the population of this busy hive—which even then was considered to be so immense and overgrown as to be a wonder of the world—did not much exceed a million; it did not reach a million and a half until five years later. It now reaches nearly three millions and a half, and is daily increasing. No city in the world, not even in the United States, where cities seem to spring up in a night like gourds or mushrooms, has grown so rapidly. Men, still in the prime of life remember when the sites of Belgravia and Tyburnia were marshes, meadows, and market-gardens; when sheep and cattle grazed in the green fields of what is now Camdenia; when Kentish (originally Cantelow's) Town was a remote village; when Trafalgar-square, the National Gallery, and the lordly clubs of Pall Mall and St. James's-street were unbuilt and unimagined; when Waterloo-bridge — which is now, save one, the oldest—was the newest metropolitan bridge over the Thames; when Stevenson thought a train upon the rail might safely travel at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and was considered a crotchety enthusiast for his pains; and when his majesty's mails, with their drivers and guards in royal livery, and with fast-going steeds, the pride of the road, assembled every evening before the General Post Office, preparatory to a start to every point of the compass, carrying their small complement of passengers and the scanty correspondence of the day. At this time—odd as it may seem to the fast young men who are now between twenty and thirty—there were in this great metropolis neither policemen, cabs, nor omnibuses.

How the people of London, who happened to be in a hurry, managed in those early days to travel from place to place in the great city, is not very clear. The quickest conveyance to be procured was a hackney coach, with two horses—a great, cast-off, lumbering, dirty, shabby vehicle, perhaps with a royal crown, or a coronet, and a flaring coat-of-arms upon the panel. The hackney coach was an old institution, and had

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been but little improved for a century. As it was in the days of Addison and Steele, so it was in those of Henry Carey, who makes one of the characters in the mock-heroic Chrononhotonthologos exclaim:

Go, call a coach, and let a coach be call'd;
Let him that calls it be the caller,
And in his calling let him nothing call
But coach! coach! coach! oh, for a coach, ye gods!

Until the last years of the reign of George the Fourth, the drivers were as antiquated as their vehicles. They were commonly called Jarvies—for what reason, perhaps, not even the learned editor of Notes and Queries can tell; and were distinguised for the general "beeriness" or, it might be said, "ginsomeness" of their faces, and for the drab greatcoats which they wore, with multifarious capes lapping over their venerable shoulders like the scales upon the rhinoceros.

But a change was at hand. People began to take houses in the suburbs, for the sake of more elbow-room and a purer atmosphere than the dense old city afforded; and some daring speculator, named Bell, whose stables were in Oxford-street, hit upon the happy idea of establishing light one-horse vehicles to replace the heavy old hackney-coaches like those in use across the channel. The new ventures were called cabriolets—a French word that did not suit John Bull, who very speedily abbreviated it into the monosyllabic "cab." Cabs did not resemble either the modern hansoms or the four-wheelers. Originally the driver sat inside along with his fare—an arrangement which did not work well, inasmuch as it admitted but one passenger, and, if the intending passenger happened to be a lady, prevented her from accepting a seat in such questionable company. After a short interval, a place was made for the driver in a little perch to the right-hand side of the vehicle, leaving room for two persons inside. The cab-drivers were younger and smarter than the old hackney-coachmen; but it does not appear that their characters were of the best, if a judgment may be formed from a caricature of the year 1829. It represents a barrister, in full legal array of wig and gown, jumping into one of the new vehicles, and desiring cabby, who has all the air of being a returned convict—there were no ticket-of-leave men in those days—to drive him to the Old Bailey. "Don't know the place, your honour; never heard of it," is Cabby's prudent reply—a strong proof of his reluctanse to revisit a spot which was only too familiar. This kind of open cab did not long suit the taste of the town, and was replaced by the covered and more commodious four-wheelers which we now see in the streets. The "hansom," so named from its inventor, and not for its beauty, was of later date; and, in spite of its clumsy shape and awkward shutter, that in rainy weather does, or may, come down upon the head of the incautious fare inside, with the force and something of the effect of a guillotine, has been doing duty in the metropolis for more than a quarter of a century.

Somewhere about 1829 or 1830, and very shortly after the public had become accustomed to the convenience of cabs, such as they were and unfortunately *are*, Mr. Shillibeer, an undertaker, bethought him that it might be pleasanter and more profitable to carry the living than the dead, and invented and introduced a new vehicle, which he called by a Latin name, suggestive of its uses "for all"—the omnibus. This name also was too long for the popular tongue, and the new hearse, adapted for the quick and not for the dead, was designated by its more pronouncible last syllable. Mr. Shillibeer was a public benefactor. His omnibuses supplied a public want; and for the comparatively limited traffic of the streets at a time when London had not attained half its present population, or spread itself over half of its actual mileage, answered the public need sufficiently well. He had, of course, competitors; and year by year, as population increased, the numbers of omnibuses plying in every direction from the centres to the extremities of London increased also, though not in the same ratio. Strangely enough, no one ever thought it worth while to make any considerable improvements upon Mr. Shillibeer's design. In other great cities and towns of England and Scotland — such as Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, and Edinburgh — and also in Paris, the omnibuses are roomy and convenient, and if not altogether what such vehicles should be, are vastly superior to those of London.

Public vehicles now whizz and dart about through every main thoroughfare, and, combined with carts, trucks, waggons, and private carriages of all kinds, make up a rushing, roaring tide or whirlpool of traffic unparalleled in the world. The growing danger of the streets is told in a few suggestive figures in the report of the Registrar-General for 1867. During that year, this useful functionary informs us that the deaths were registered of one hundred and sixty-four persons who were killed by horses or carriages in the streets.

The less serious accidents that occurred amounted, during the same period, to the large number of one thousand four hundred and sixty-seven; the two accounts showing that an average of one person was killed every second day, and four persons injured every day throughout the year, either by the recklessness of the drivers—public and private—or by their own incapacity to steer their way with safety through the streets. Everybody knows the danger of railway travelling, and when an accident does occur, how frightful it is; but figures show conclusively that the perils of the street are greatly in excess of those of the rail, and that, while one hundred and sixty-four pedestrians were killed in one year in London in a population of three millions and a half, only one person in ten millions met his death in a railway accident. It is thus much safer, on the average, to travel by rail from London to Inverness, or across the whole continent

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of Europe, than to attempt to cross Cheapside or Oxford-street, unless you are young and strong, and have all your wits about you. The Registrar-General, in view of this fact, suggests, and all whose business or ill fate compels them to be much in London will agree with him, that at all the more important crossings—such, for instance, as at the junction of Regent-street and Oxford-street, or at the point where Farringdon-street and Bridge-street, Blackfriars, meet Fleet-street and Ludgate-hill, and many other crossings as crowded and as dangerous—light bridges for foot-passengers should be thrown across, or subways, such as go under railway stations, should be constructed; and doubtless, when a few more hundred children, infirm persons, and aged men and women shall have been killed, with perhaps a bishop, a member of parliament, or a highly respectable millionnaire among the number, the bridges and the subways will be provided. Bridges or no bridges, the cataract of horses and vehicles in the metropolitan streets will continue to increase in volume and force as population augments; and something will have to be done, either to divert, to regulate, or to economise it, if this great city is to remain habitable any longer for that rather large and very intelligent class of people, workers or non-workers, who value their health, their comfort, or their safety.

When railways were first established, their termini were generally placed at considerable distances from the metropolitan centre. The London and North-Western came nearest at Euston-square, where it still has its head-quarters; the South-Eastern stopped at the Surrey side of London-bridge; the South-Western, still more modest, stopped at Vaux-hall. But the introduction of railways right into the city of later years, though it must have diminished a certain amount of cab and omnibus traffic, does not seem to the eye of any ordinary observer to have sensibly disencumbered the streets. Even the greatest boon of all the means of locomotion yet accorded to the peripatetic and travelling public of London, the Metropolitan or Underground Railway, which carries its millions of passengers per annum, does not seem to have rendered unnecessary the employment of a single cab or omnibus that previously plied for hire in our busy streets. Open out whatever mode of relief we may, the great thoroughfares remain as crowded as ever. London is in this respect like Niagara: the torrent roars as furiously as before, though a hundred mills and factories, each of which requires and takes away a certain amount of water-power, may be established on either side. The main stream is inexhaustible, and can only be diverted in rills and driblets, that create no sensible diminution of the mighty current.

London locomotion in our day presents itself under a twofold aspect to the consideration of the daily increasing inhabitants of this nation within a nation—this people of three and a half millions, almost double in number to the whole population of the immense continent of Australia, greater also than the whole population of Scotland, though cooped up in a space about the extent of the Isle of Wight. The first point that requires consideration in a time when people must ride in public vehicles is the comfort, convenience, and economy of the carriages, small or great, which are licensed to convey them from place to place; the second is the safety of the multitudinous army of pedestrians who traverse, on their business or pleasure, such comparatively short distances as do not make riding compulsory upon the feeble or the hurried. The first question leads to an examination of the existing cabs and omnibuses, and whether the accommodation they offer, and the rates at which they supply it, are of a kind to meet the public requirements; and the second leads to the inquiry whether, under a better system of management, the streets could not be relieved of at least one-half of the number of horses and of vehicles that now almost blockade them, without diminishing the amount of accommodation afforded to the public.

On the first point there is little to be said that needs saying. Our cabs are a disgrace to a civilised city, but might easily be improved under better municipal regulations, and perhaps by removing some of the restrictions that now fetter this branch of trade, and permitting the introduction of superior vehicles at such rates of fare as the proprietors chose to demand and the public would be content to pay. But bad as are the cabs, the omnibuses are ten times worse. Ill-constructed, ill-ventilated, dirty, close, narrow, unfit when crowded (as they usually are) for a decent woman either to press into or out of, with an amount of seat-room per individual inconsistent with the deference due to the modesty of the one sex or the convenience of the other, the omnibuses of London are models of "what to avoid." A few years ago, when the proprietors of the various lines united, and formed what is known as the London General Omnibus Company (Limited), the public was promised that the quasi-monopoly they established would conduce to the general interest, inasmuch as a rich and powerful company would be in a position to provide better vehicles and charge lower fares than the poor proprietor of one or perhaps two carriages. But all these promises came to nothing. No improvement worth record has been made, and fares, instead of being lessened, have been raised. But while the omnibus proprietors have it in their power to construct their vehicles on a better principle as regards ventilation, to bestow more attention upon cleanliness, they are not able to provide carriages of a greater width than those they now employ, so as to allow ample room to every passenger and a clear space down the middle, unless upon conditions which would tend to encumber the streets still more fearfully than they are encumbered at present. The space which an

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omnibus occupies in the roadway is to be measured, not by the width of the body of the vehicle in which the passengers are cramped and confined, but by the width between the tires of the wheels. If the whole of this amount of space could be made available for the passengers, they would have all the elbow-room that the most fastidious could require, and omnibuses would be as comfortable as first-class railway carriages. If the wheels were, as in the present vehicles, placed externally, the omnibuses would occupy a much larger portion of the roadway than they now do, and would thus increase the obstruction in the public thoroughfare, which it is absolutely necessary to diminish. If, on the other hand, the wheels were placed under these enlarged vehicles, as in railway carriages, it would require the work of at least three horses to do the work of one, and the streets would be blockaded by a new cause, and rendered more impassable than ever.

This leads to the remedy. What London requires is, not the abolition of the existing omnibuses, but a relief to the enormous pressure on the streets, by the introduction of wider carriages, not occupying more space than the omnibuses, and with the wheels inside of the projecting bulk and under the carriages, as we see on the railway, and the laying down of tramways, by means of which one horse might draw the load that, without the aid of the rail or tram, would be too much for the strength of three or four. In one sentence, London must have tramways such as are established in America, and which work so satisfactorily to the public in all the great cities of the United States and Canada. Under the operation of this system, one car, not occupying more width of road than an ordinary omnibus, will be able to convey thrice the number of passengers, outside and in, at about half the cost which the omnibus monopoly demands and receives from a patient and helpless public, and with a comfort and convenience which no omnibus, under any system of management or construction, unaided by the rail or tram, could hope to afford. That portion of the public which, had it lived eighty or even forty years ago, would have objected to gas, to the "new police," to railways, or to any other great improvement, objects, as a matter of course, to street tramways; but, also as a matter of course, these objections will be overruled. The tramway will be laid down in London, as it has been laid down in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, and in scores and hundreds of populous towns and cities, and the first people to express surprise at the convenience, economy, and utility of the new arrangement will be those over-zealous or over-interested conservatives of the status quo in locomotion, who believe, or affect to believe, that the rail in city streets is a nuisance. The rails laid down eight years ago in London were a nuisance, for they sometimes wrenched off the wheels of carriages that had as much right to the use of the roadway as cars. But this nuisance is not inherent to the reform sought, and a new rail has been patented, perfectly level with the road, which will not interfere with the wheels of ordinary carriages. Cheap fares, commodious carriages, easy running, diminution of the number of horses at present employed in the streets, and a saving of highway rate to every parish through which the trams shall be laid—are a little bead-roll of advantages which the practical people of the metropolis will not be slow to appreciate, however much the omnibus interest may object to the good thing. The old stage-coach proprietors opposed the rail; the Thames watermen opposed the penny steam-boats; the old Tories opposed the Reform Bill of 1832; the old fogies of 1809, alarmed at possible explosions in the dead of night, opposed the introduction of gas-lamps in the streets; the steady old chiefs of the Post Office, when Rowland Hill promulgated his revolutionary and, to their minds, wicked idea of a universal penny post, were dead against him; but what of that? We have got the railway, we have got steam-boats, we have got gas, we have got the penny-post, and we shall have tramways in all the business thoroughfares and streets of London that are available for the purpose.

RED HUGH.

O PLEASANT whisper on the heath
  Beside the moorland rill!
O happy meetings 'neath the moon
  When all the winds were still!
What kisses when we plighted troth,
  What partings by the pine!
I murmur'd Alice in my dreams,
  And long'd to call her mine.

Her father was a yeoman,
  A kindly man and good,
Who farm'd the acres of his sire,
  And dwelt in Ferndale Wood;
And I—I fancy at that time
  My work brought little gain;
The chiefest labour of my life
  Was loving Alice Rayne.

I wrought for the approval
  That shone in her sweet face.
When Whit-tide came, in every game
  I held the foremost place;
Mine was the stoutest cudgel
  Our Cumbrian yeoman knew,
At wrestling mine the only arm
  Could vanquish strong Red Hugh.

The rivalry between us
  Was bitter from the first,
An enmity of envy born,
  Which even love had nurst;
For in his churlish fashion
  He liked her well; and she
Play'd with his fancy, womanlike.
  It wrought a pain in me;

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For Alice, though she loved me well,
Would praise him, and would say
Red Hugh should bring the flowers next year
And crown her Queen of May;
And when I left her sore displeased,
And Hugh would come elate,
She struck him dumb with scornful frown
And mocked his forward glances down;
And so she earned his hate.

Me too he held his enemy,
In that I overthrew
The triumph of his braggart strength:
Men spoke no more of Hugh,
Nor vaunted now his quarter-staff
Nor what his heart could dare.
He hated me that I was strong,
And her, that she was fair;
In his dull anger, many a day
He vow'd a deadly deed should each—
My stronger arm, her sharper speech—
Most bitterly repay.

He knew how Rumour's lying tongue
Would spread his harmful tales.
He feign'd rough pity for her youth;
And evil never fails
To spread, like fire upon the moor
When autumn winds are strong.
He whisper'd strange and direful words,
To do her wicked wrong.

If he but outwardly had shown
His wish to work her harm,
His evil features soon had borne
The vengeance of my arm;
But still he kept a kindly guise,
And shrank from open strife;
And while I knew that words could kill,
I could not face the nameless ill
That shadow'd all her life.

Before the half-averted glance,
The beck of silent scorn,
She droop'd: her form grew slighter,
Her features pale and worn.
When bolder grew the whispers,
And Slander wagg'd its tongue,
Long nights she passed in prayers and tears
Beneath the weight of wrong.

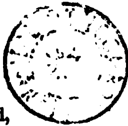
And one day flashed her anger,
When, struck with sudden pain
At what our small world mutter'd,
She spoke with slow disdain:
"Were I a man, and love of mine
Were slander'd thus, I trow
I'd brand the coward where he stood,
And, ere he made his vile words good,
There should be Liar writ in blood
Upon the coward's brow!"

No knight in ages olden
Had blither heart than mine,
When I made oath to seek Red Hugh,
Since Alice gave the sign;
And there, before her father,
I swore with lusty breath
To bind Red Hugh to silence
Or face the grip of death.

I sought him at the harvesting
I did not find him there.
I sought him at the ale-house bench
Where oft he would repair.
His boon companions answer'd,
Lounging about the door,
"Red Hugh is wont to wander
About the Ravenmoor:

"To day he had his bag and gun,
Haply in quest of game."
And forth for Ravenmoor I set,
My eager heart aflame.
The morning turn'd to noon that burn'd
Its arrows in my soul,
And ere the fainting August heat
Had melted into evening sweet
O'er gorse and fern, I set my feet
Upon the tardy goal.

We stood upon a lofty crag,
A black tarn underneath.
A careless foot, or crumbling rock,
Had plunged us into death.
"By all the fiends that sent thee here,"
He cried,—"a ball of lead
I'd drive, if but my gun were charged,
Into thy lovesick head!"



And by its shining barrel
The gunstock brandishing,
Madly he sprang upon me;
But I withstood his spring.
We closed. No word was utter'd,
But, deadly foe to foe,
Throats clutched, hot hands, and hotter breath,
A space we struggled. Black as death
Gloom'd the abyss. His strength was spent,
And, with one wavering shriek, he went
Down to the tarn below.

There came an awful silence
On all the hills around,
And, save the rustle of the leaves,
I never heard a sound.
I saw the circles in the tarn,
That broaden'd till they died.
I felt the ancient curse of Cain;
And, but for love of Alice Rayne,
I could have wish'd Red Hugh again
Were standing at my side.

Yet, nerving courage to the task,
I sought the place beneath,
All trembling lest mine eyes should see
Red Hugh in grasp of death.
The dark tarn had a smooth, blank face,
And not a thing was there
To tell of what my hand had done,
Or save me from despair.

The heavy hand that God has laid
On murderers from the first
Lay on my soul that night. I stray'd
Into the further North, afraid
To know the fearful worst—
To know if they had found the corse
In sluggish water by the gorse,
(Dread secret Night had nurst!)
Or if he lay there still death-pale.
Thus on—by flowering rise and vale
I roam'd, a man accurst.

Months past. A hunger to behold
Her winsome face once more,
To Ferndale village brought me back.
I stood beside her door.

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The ruddy firelight shone within.
I entered: in her place
She sat; and then she started up
And met me face to face.

"My Alice!"—But her cheeks were pale,
Her look was stern and cold.
She was not wont to greet me so
In happy days of old.
I flung myself before her feet,
I bowed my heavy head;
She tore her garment from my grasp—
"Red Hugh!" was all she said.

And thus the fulness of my crime
Had earn'd its cruel meed.
Self-charged before the judgment-seat,
I told the rash red deed;
Yielding to vengeful law a life
Too bitter to be borne.
I thought, "'Tis blood for blood: I die.
Her tears may one day sanctify
The grave none else shall mourn."

They bore me to the prison
Amid the savage crowd,
And cries of "Give us Hugh—Red Hugh!"
From voices stern and loud.
The warders guarded me from blows;
They bore me swift along,
Or I had fallen on the spot
And perished 'mid the throng.

All through my weary vigils
Throughout both day and night,
The vision of the silent tarn
Was ever in my sight.
I heard the echoes give again
The shriek when Red Hugh died.
I fancied that his shadow stood
Accusing at my side.

My span of life grew shorter
With every sinking sun.
I wearied till the night had past,
Yet fear'd when it was done.
One day into my cell she came,
My Alice—and I ween
Her tears of sorrow sweeter were
Than all her love had been.

Then rose the fatal morning.
I heard the workmen go
And rear the heavy beams on high
With many a sounding blow.
I heard the sullen murmur
Of voices in the town,
And knew that I should never see
Another sun o'er Ferndale lea
In crimson rays go down.

A still, blood-eager multitude
Stood round the awful thing,
Glimmering, a dreadful skeleton,
In the misty morn of spring.
I looked upon the faces
That came to see me die—
Refreshing odours from the fields
Were wafted through the sky.

One dreadful face enchained my glance:
It gloated on my plight,
And seem'd to love the deathly scene,
And linger o'er the sight.
I saw it pressing nearer,
Haply for freer view.
I watched it. Then—a sudden thrill:
"'Tis Hugh!" I cried—"Red Hugh!"

A start—a break—a murmur!
I see it from my place.
A hundred eyes are gathered
On the sullen, startled face.
A hundred hands outreaching,
Thrust him from where he stood.
The wondering masses onward roll,
Bearing Red Hugh. 'Tis done. My soul
Is innocent of blood.

They told me, when my swoon was past,
The tale that he confess'd:
How half dead from the tarn he crept,
A purpose in his breast
To hide himself from sight, and leave
Blood-guilt upon my head;
Until the morn he came elate
To view me borne unto my fate
Betrayed him; for his heart of hate
Hunger'd to see me dead.

What boots it that I tell you more?
For here my story ends,
Here 'mid the leaves of Ferndale
And troops of ancient friends,
And Time has washed the stain of blood
From my dark web of life:
One silver strand runs in the woof,
For Alice is my wife.

IN THE AIR.

We finished the paper, On the Wing, in our last number with this sentence: "Flight consists of two things — buoyancy and waftage: and without saying that wings have nothing to do with buoyancy, and lightness nothing to do with waftage, it may be submitted that buoyancy (like that of a balloon) depends on gaseous structure, and waftage on the mechanism of wings; flying being the combination of the two as guided by the instinct or will of a bird." Upon this text we would preach a little longer:

What are the gases which give buoyancy? How much are they lighter than the air? By dissecting flying animals under water, the presence of the gases in their bones and bags and cells is easily detected. No chemist, as far as I know, has ever caught and analysed these gases, to ascertain either their nature or their weight. This would be worth doing by some chemical members of a London or Paris flying society. But guesses sufficiently near the truth for my argument may be made after considering what is known respecting the gases of the breath and the blood.

Oxygen forms twenty-one of every hundred parts of the air, the proportion being pretty much the same everywhere, in towns and on mountains, only rather less in populous cities than in forests. All sorts of tiny things float in the air. The controversy which has been kept up with vivacity of late years on the Continent, respecting spontaneous generation, has caused much attention to be given to the bodies

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which float in the air. Some observers find many, and some few, seeds and eggs, according as the observers look for proofs of generation from germs and sperms, or for proofs of development. M. Pouchet, the zealous opponent of those he calls the panspermists (the most eminent and numerous of the physiologists) gives the following account of the things he has found: At sea, and on hill-tops, these flotsam and jetsam of the air are rare, while they are marvellously plentiful in old and crowded towns. Food, clothes, furniture, houses, everything, in fact, furnishes particles to become the motes dancing on the sunbeams. Flour is most common. Particles of the corn for which Joseph and his brethren went to Egypt may be still hidden in cracks and crannies, or floating about —adhering to an insect's wing, or caught in a snow-flake. There are scales of moths, skeletons of infusoria, and living animalcules in the air. Dust and smoke contribute to the mote-dances. But the floating things do not remain in the air; they go into the insides of animals. Not merely flour, but living microscopical crustaceans have been found alive in the lungs of a dead man. Filiments of wool and silk, richly dyed, were once drawn from the bones of a peacock, the pet of a château. Flour has been discovered stuffing the bones of a baker's poultry; while the bones of the fowls of a dealer in charcoal contained particles of charcoal dust. Dust of leaves and bark penetrates inside the woodpecker. Vegetable dust, and filaments of cotton and wool, are found inside the bones of crows and magpies.

What is the law in such cases? Heat has much to do with locomotion. Heat affects gravity, the law which makes stars and tears round. The earth is continually rolling out of cold air into warm. Glaciers likewise glide towards the warmth; icebergs float from icy towards tepid seas; and the aërial and aqueous oceans obey the solar and lunar rays. Temperature has much to do with the pullings and pushings of particles, or electrical and magnetical phenomena, to which are ascribed the rotations in vegetable cells. The antheridiæ, or pollenaria, of mosses and ferns rotate according to the law of the Archimedean screw. No less distinguished a physiologist than Professor J. Mueller, of Berlin, has emitted the opinion that, whilst the bones of birds are undoubtedly made empty that they might be lighter than they would be if they held marrow, the air in the aërial bags does not much lessen the weight of the birds, because it is nearly as dense as common air. He does not, however, say who the observer was who weighed the gases in the aërial bags and bones of birds when flying; and how he ascertained their density when they were inside the pelican or the albatross, apparently asleep in the storm. Birds are six or seven degrees warmer than men, because they contain, proportionally, more carbon and hydrogen to combine with oxygen, and produce warmth. The difference between summer heat and blood heat is twenty degrees; and, probably, six or seven degrees more in birds than in men. The temperature of a young sparrow eight days old fell sixteen or seventeen degrees in an hour of separation from its nest and its mother. Fledging is warming; feathering is lightening. The heart of a hybernating bat beats some fifty times a minute, and of a summer bat two hundred times. Fishes are called cold-blooded animals, yet they are half a degree to a degree and a half warmer than the water they swim in. The fish that can live in ice, keep the water around them from freezing. The arterial blood of a bat is less crimson in winter than in summer, and arterial blood in general is a degree or two warmer than veinous blood. Animal heat, the chemists tell us, is due to the combination in the lungs of the oxygen of the air with the carbon and hydrogen of the blood. The carbonic acid which is exhaled is developed in the whole vascular system. If the observation and calculations of Magnus are to be credited, arterial blood is more gaseous than veinous blood. Carbonic acid gas and oxygen gas both existing in the blood, numerous experiments seem to prove that the carbonic gas is expelled, not by the atmospheric air, but by the other gases. Blood contains oxygen, carbon, and azotic gases; veinous blood more carbonic gas than arterial, and arterial more oxygen than veinous blood. The miracle of the vivification of the blood, the change from death to life, is ascribed to this predominance of oxygen gas. Carbonic acid gas is disengaged in respiration when lungs are distended; in fermentation when liquids are swelled; in combustion, which turns solid wood and coal into smoke and flame; in putrefaction, which brings dead bodies above the surface of water; and this disengagement of gas, wherever it occurs, makes its subjects lighter.

A summary of the facts I have collected will make it more and more evident still that buoyancy in air, as in water, is due to the presence of gases. Flying animals are built to hold gases everywhere—in their bones, their bodies, their skins; and, as their blood is several degrees warmer than the blood of walking or running animals, their gases are, probably, several degrees lighter. Azote, or hydrogen, or whatever the gas held in the gaseous structures may be, it is proportionally warmer, and therefore proportionally lighter, than air. But the bat, it is said, has not the structure of birds, and yet it flies well.

A word on bats. I have just mentioned that the heart of the flying bat beats four beats for one beat of the hybernating bat; and I have been proving that greater warmth implies greater lightness. Digestion having gone on during hybernation, and all the stores of fat having been absorbed, the bat awakes from torpor extremely light and thin, a resuscitated mummy, and, from hanging to projections, takes every evening to a few hours of flying and feeding. The bat is, like the bird, provided with aërial oars, although they have membranes instead of

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feathers. As there are octapoda which swim by means of membranes instead of fins, there are mammals which fly by means of membranes instead of wings. Bats, called by the Savans, hand-wings (Cheiroptera), hand-rats (Cheiromus), and cat-monkeys (Galespithecus), can fly by means of membranes. The bat flies best. But the flight of the bat, compared with the flight of the swallow, pigeon, or pelican, is a poor performance. When a boy I have knocked down many a bat with my Highland bonnet on the roads of Aberdeenshire. No boy ever thought of trying this game on with a swallow or a sparrow. The bat spends most of his time hanging to some projection in a hole, and flies only for a few hours in the evenings of a few weeks in the year. The aye-aye, or rat-monkey of Madagascar, has a flat tail like a squirrel, and derives its name from the exclamation of astonishment which it excites when seen leaping, bounding, or almost flying from tree to tree in the dusk of the evening. The cat-monkeys have been mistaken for bats. The fingers of the bat are long, thin, light, cylindrical, and hollow; and the bat flies by using the fine membrane between them as a wing. The membrane of the cat-monkey, on the contrary, is not a wing, or aërial oar, but is a sort of parachute spreading over the back, and expanded and regulated by the four arms and hands. The parachute spreads over the whole back of the body from the lips to the fingers, and covers the tail. Some of these cat-monkeys can fly a hundred yards or more in an oblique and inclined line. The female flies with her little one at her breast. Now, not merely is the humerus of all these animals with membranes on their hands and backs, long, slim, and hollow; there are connected with it one or two holes, and one of these holes communicates with the instruments of smell. Certain bats have also a curious "rotule brachiale," as the French call it, or arm-wheel (Patella brachialis), which was discovered by Mechlin in the extensor muscle of the fore arm of the vampire bat. The swimming lizards have also this bone, which, therefore, is probably useful for floating in water and air. The kalong, or fox-bat, is said to take long, straight, slow flights from forest to forest, and from plantation to plantation, in search of fruit.

The differences between bats and birds, viewed as flying machines, are mere differences of form. The birds owe their buoyancy to gaseous structure, and their waftage to their feathered wings; and the bats owe their buoyancy to gaseous structure, and their waftage to membraneous wings. The flying-fish have pectoral fins, so long and wide that they serve as wings for a time. The skin of the flanks of the flying squirrels, extending from their fore to their hind legs and feet, forms a parachute under them, as the skin of the cat-monkeys forms a parachute over them. On the whole, then, I submit that buoyancy is proportional to gaseous, and waftage to wing structure; and when both are most perfect, the flying is most perfect.

A strong confirmation of these views is obtained from an examination of the floating machines which ingenious men have successfully built, and from the attempts which they have unsuccessfully made to build flying machines adapted for the air. Mechanical invention can produce ships which float in the air, but it cannot guide them there. Balloons are ships at the mercy of the winds and tides, without sails and rudders. By throwing out ballast they can be sent up, and by letting off gas they can be let down; but they cannot be steered to any given spot. Any master mariner can say, "Hoist a flag on any spot you like of the ocean, which covers three-fourths of the globe, and I will take my ship to it;" but the sailors in the air can go up and be swept about, and they can come down, and this is all they can do. When shall they be able to say, "Hoist a flag on any peak you like of the Andes, or the Himalayas, and I will anchor my air-ship there?"

The best models for air-ships or boats were probably the wing-fingers or pterodactyles, now only found as fossils. These bats had aërial oars of membraneous structure, measuring some thirty or forty feet from tip to tip.

The imitation of wings seems to have been the first notion of the air sailors:

> Then with expanded wings he steers his flight,
> Aloft incumbent on the dusky air,
> That felt unusual weight,

says Milton, describing Satan; and the makers of flying-machines, from the earliest of them on record down to the members of the British and French Aëronautical Societies of the present day, have always persisted in the error of attaching undue importance to wings, and insufficient importance to gas tubes, bags, and cells. The young monk of Malmsbury, who, it is said, flew from the steeple and broke his bones, boasted that he would have succeeded quite if he had only had a broad tail of feathers. The Marquis de Bacqueville, who started to fly across the Seine, from the roof of his house, to the Garden of the Tuileries, about a hundred and thirty years ago, found the working of his wings beyond his strength, and fell down, and broke his leg against a floating wash-house in the Seine. Five or six hundred years ago a man, who is said to have flown from a hill at Bologna into the river Reno, was neither killed nor drowned. Proving clearly, to the satisfaction of the Holy Inquisition, that he was in league with Satan, he was burnt.

Some success was obtained several centuries ago in the construction and use of aërial velocipedes. Friar Bacon, Bishop Wilkens, and the Marquis of Worcester, all mention these inventions. The editor of the pamphlet on Aërial Locomotion, from the Transactions of the Aëronautical Society of Great Britain, quotes the following passage from "Astra Castra," by Hutton Turnor: "Soon after Bacon's time, projects were instituted to train up children from their infancy in the exercise of flying with artificial wings; which seemed to

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be the favourite plan of the artists and philosophers of that day. If we credit the accounts of some of these experiments, it would seem that considerable progress was made that way. The individuals who used the wings could skim over the surface of the earth with a great deal of ease and celerity. This was accomplished by the combined faculties of running and flying. It is stated that, by an alternately continued motion of the wings against the air, and the feet against the ground, they were enabled to move along with a striding motion, and with incredible speed."

Kites have been used to assist ascension. Experiments have proved that a surface of only fifty-five square feet can support a weight of ninety-two and a quarter pounds. The author of the History of the Char-volant, or kite carriage, says: "These buoyant sails, possessing immense power, will, as we have before remarked, serve for floating observatories. . . . . Elevated in the air, a single sentinel, with a perspective, could watch and report the advance of the most powerful forces, while yet at a great distance. He could mark their line of march, the composition of their force, and their general strength, long before he could be seen by the enemy. . . . . Nor was less progress made in the experimental department, when large weights were required to be raised or transposed. While on this subject we must not omit to observe, that the first person who soared aloft in the air by this invention was a lady, whose courage would not be denied this test of its strength. An arm-chair was brought on the ground, then lowering the cordage of the kite by slackening the lower brace, the chair was firmly lashed to the main line, and the lady took her seat. The main brace being hauled taut, the huge buoyant sail rose aloft with its fair burden, continuing to ascend to the height of a hundred yards. On descending, she expressed herself much pleased with the easy motion of the kite, and the delightful prospect she had enjoyed. Soon after this, another experiment of a similar nature took place, when the inventor's son successfully carried out a design not less safe than bold, that of scaling, by this powerful aërial machine, the brow of a cliff two hundred feet in perpendicular height. Here, after safely landing, he again took his seat in a chair expressly prepared for the purpose, and, detaching the swivel-line which kept it at its elevation, glided gently down the cordage to the hand of the director. The buoyant sail employed on this occasion was thirty feet in height, with a proportionate spread of canvas. The rise of the machine was most majestic, and nothing could surpass the steadiness with which it was manœuvred, the certainty with which it answered the action of the braces, and the ease with which its power was lessened or increased. . . . . Subsequently to this, an experiment of a very bold and novel character was made upon an extensive down, where a waggon with a considerable load was drawn along, whilst this huge machine at the same time carried an observer aloft in the air, realising almost the romance of flying."

Volumes upon volumes might be filled with descriptions of unsuccessful flying machines. The council of the Aëronautical Society are deluged with suggestions, plans, and specifications, and "secret inventions certain of success upon receipt of funds." What I wish to record in the briefest possible way are the partial successes. Agreeing cordially with the pawky Scot, who said, "Next to knowing what will do, it is well to know what will not do;" and with the "'cute" Yankee, that "there is only one thing beats trying, that's doing," I have prescribed for myself the task of saying only how nature does it, leaving to others the recording of the ways of not doing it. Before leaving the kite carriages, I may mention that the Duke of Sutherland will give a hundred pounds to anybody who shall fly up to the roof of Stafford House.

A hundred years ago, Dr. Black, the professor of chemistry in the University of Edinburgh, exhibited the first balloon, a large skin bag full of hydrogen gas, the very gas which most likely gives their buoyancy to the birds and the bats. The most fatal accidents seem to have been caused by machines embodying sound principles in untried and unsuitable forms. The Montgolfier and Tytler balloon was a contrivance for filling a large bag with smoke from a brazier, being pulled up, fireplace, fuel, and all, by the smoke. The Black and Charles balloon was a sack full of hydrogen gas; and this is the balloon which has become, in our day, Glaisher's sky observatory. Rosier, wishing to be able to regulate his specific gravity by making gas, combined the two balloons, the one of which set fire to the other, and he fell down and was killed. This power of heating their gases, the flying animals, as I have shown, possess, and the air sailors will in turn have to obtain it. Rosier's object must be attained and his fate avoided. A Cocking parachute might be tried, with tubes of india-rubber or gutta-percha, or with bladders, instead of a material so unsuitable as tin. Cracked tin may one day justify the opinion of Mr. Green, who took poor Cocking up attached to the Nassau balloon, that his death was not a mad freak, but was a sad accident.

Nineteen years after Black's balloon had been exhibited in Edinburgh, a Swede made a dish of the most beautiful fruits, which were brought in as dessert at the banquets of great personages. Whilst the guests were still admiring the fruits, and probably desiring to partake of them, they were seen to rise out of the splendid dishes which contained them, and float away in the air. The French Court having been enchanted with these toys, it was explained to the personages who held the purse-strings of the nation, that nothing but money was wanted to enable two ingenious brothers of the name of Montgolfier to rise up hanging from balloons and float away as the apples and oranges had done. In 1782, the servants of the royal sports

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under the direction of the senior Montgolfier sent a balloon up at Versailles in presence of the court, a balloon with a car containing a sheep, a duck, and a cock; the first aëronauts; the next in the same year were the Montgolfier brothers.

Birds having been described as high-pressure locomotives, a Manchester correspondent of the Aëronautical Society F.D.A. gives an interesting, valuable, and humourous account of his experiments. When a very young man he saw the experiments with locomotive engines at Rainhill, near Liverpool, which prepared public opinion for the railway between Manchester and Liverpool; and thought he could easily make an engine to fly by steam. Power and lightness, and nothing more were necessary. He made the wings valvular for the up-stroke to let the air through, an obvious departure from nature. His flying engine, and its first performance shall be described in his own words: "The cylinder of the engine was one-inch bore, and three-inch stroke, the slide valve was worked by an arrangement of tappets, and the piston reciprocated rapidly without fly-wheel or eccentric; the cylinder was firmly fixed to the steam generator, or boiler. The piston-rod was attached to a pair of wings, of a triangular shape, and about two feet six inches long. These opened somewhat like a Venetian blind at the up-stroke, and closed during the down-stroke, and moved through an arc of eighty degrees. The heating surface in the generator was about one hundred square inches.

"I have forgotten the weight of the whole, but as there were only thin sheets of water in the generator, it would perhaps be about six or seven pounds. When all was ready for a trial, I suspended the machine by a cord from the ceiling of a room to about five feet from the floor, then got up steam, and allowed it to accumulate, so that there would be a good pressure to start with. When the steam was turned on, the wings worked vigorously, but the machine jerked up and down, whirled round, rushed from side to side, and, in fact, performed all kinds of gymnastic movements within its limits (except flying), to the great amusement of the particular friends invited to witness the experiment. With some difficulty I caught the model, and turned off the steam, and was preparing for another trial, when lo! the boiler exploded, filling the place with steam, and scattering the red-hot charcoal about the room. When the fog had cleared up I looked up for my friends, but they had all 'skedaddled' away, as many 'friends' do in the time of misfortune. Thus ended my first attempt to fly by steam."

Grown a little wiser by experience, he next tried to ascertain if his engine would not absolutely fly, what amount of gravity it would overcome by the action of its wings. He suspended the engine from a long balance or screw-beam, so that he could counterbalance it with weights at the opposite end, but the up-stroke of the engine drove the engine down and the down-stroke up, so that when at work it beat up and down violently. A subsequent experiment with vanes proved to him that great power is not necessary for flying. Bats, birds, and insects make no violent exertions. The motion of the wings of the rook, for example, would, according to the doctrine of resistance, produce only a few drachms instead of a pound of buoyancy. The wing strikes elastic globules of air, which propel it. The air pulses up against the wing, somewhat like the breath which makes the pea dance in the tobacco-pipe. The last experiment of this gentleman was a very remarkable one. . . . "I made another engine to be moved by steam. Its construction was as follows: On the top of a small but strong steam generator I screwed a steam-tight, movable joint; to this joint was secured a long brass pipe, about three-eighths in internal diameter, and to the end of this pipe I fixed my engine and wings only (*i.e.*, not the boiler). The brass tube gave no support to the engine, for it was jointed to the top at the steam boiler, as before stated, and in some measure represented the string of a kite, only it conveyed steam to the engine. When all was ready, the generator put on the fire of the smith's forge; the engine and wings, at the end of the long pipe, rested on a post or stump about two feet from the ground. I turned the steam on at the generator, when, to my great satisfaction, the engine instantly flew into the air, and kept itself up to the length of its tether. I increased the power of the steam until the wings began to emit a drumming sound, when suddenly they both broke off close to the engine, which, of course, came down like a stone."

The editor of Aërial Locomotion remarks, that if the vulcanised india-rubber flexible steam pipe had been known at the time, the author of this paper would probably have preferred it; and adds, "the idea is very ingenious and worthy of the attention of experimenters." The idea thus partially realised was anticipated by the Poet Darwin. And after all the doubts cast upon his prophecy in reference to aërial navigation, it may happen yet that the couplet on it shall be seen to be just as prophetic as the couplet upon steam on land and water:

> Soon shall thy arm unconquered steam, afar,
> Draw the slow barge, and drive the rapid car;
> Or on wide waving wings expanded bear,
> The flying chariot through the streams of air.

Tennyson, like Darwin, has seen in vision the coming age of flying machines, and both predict war in the air. Very few years elapsed after the publication of Darwin's prophecy, before four lines of it became actual fact.

> Fair crews triumphant leaning from above,
> Shall wave their fluttering kerchiefs as they move;

a scene which most of us have witnessed; and a quarter of a century had not passed before the French gained a victory by reconnoitring their enemies from a balloon, a step towards the time when the lines will be realised—

> Or warrior bands alarm the gaping crowd,
> And armies shrink beneath the shadowy cloud.

The vision of aërial war may be only too truly in accordance with human nature; but I

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see a gentler and nearer vision, the show of flying machines promised for midsummer next by the Aëronautical Society. Many most curious machines are already prepared for inspection. The illustrations of mathematical, mechanical, chemical, and physiological truths, already existing in museums, laboratories, and workshops, if collected together for study, cannot fail to enlarge, correct, and deepen the opinions of all who have studied the subject, and especially by enabling the men of science and the men of skill to understand each other. Machines and engines are sure to be plentiful, and I suppose every kind of balloon and kite, skeletons and dissections of every kind of flying animal, and as many as possible of the living animals themselves. But there are two things which may be overlooked—gases and toys—which I submit would be injurious omissions. The whole series of the experiments of Cigna, Priestley, and Lavoisier, on the composition of air, if exhibited, would show why the flying animals have the warmest blood and the least specific gravity, and how pure air, or oxygen, burns fixed air, or carbon; and how inflammable air, or hydrogen, produces buoyancy. And aërial toys ought not to be overlooked. The toys are the boys for inventions and discoveries, as the histories of inventions and discoveries prove to all who read. As for grave and grey, reverend and rheumatic seniors, what could be better for them than to get new leases of life from the enjoyment of new toys, to see cars from China flying along English swards, or kites up in the English blue sky, which had come all the way from Japan, representing elderly gentlemen walking arm-in-arm, or gigantic crawling centipedes? As for Barmacide desserts of gaseous fruits, without preceding courses of solid refreshment, they might not be popular in England. On the whole, and seriously, those of us who have seen steam making travel marvellously easier on the earth and over the water may, at the coming exhibition, have our hopes strengthened of the approach of the day when men shall become freedmen of the airy sphere.

CHAUCER-ENGLISH IN THE DALES.

What we call provincialisms, are very often the echoes of the long-forgotten national language, and the last remains of primitive national habits. This is certainly the case in the north country—which I will call "Cumberland" broadly; the slight differences existing among the four northern counties not being sufficiently wide to need a separate classification.

The old writers of the fourteenth century are full of Cumberland peculiarities. When Chaucer says of the Wife of Bath that she was "somdel deef," he was talking pure Cumberland. The Jobby of to-day, saying the same thing of Aggy, might exchange some-deal for summut if he thought fit, and he might probably add, "an' that's a pity," instead of Chaucer's "and that was skathe," for he is fond of the phrase "an' that's a pity;" but he would understand the line as it runs, without the glossary which the puir daft Southron body needs. Jobby would also understand the knight's troubles in husbandry though only metaphorical.

> I have God wot a large field to ere,
> And wayke ben the oxen in my plough.

But he would undoubtedly laugh as he lounged against the chimley-lug in his heavy broad-shouldered way, and would most probably call out as his comment, "But la'avin days! wha' iver heerd tell ov a bodie, not fairlie daft an' dune, pleughing wi' beests!" And, by the way, that word daft is good old English, though Chaucer and his contemporaries use daf for the noun—as a daf, a fool—and bedaffed for the past tense of the verb to bedaf or to be bedaffed—made a fool of. We have it only as an adjective; though sometimes I have heard a man called "a dafty" as well.

Chaucer elides the o in to, and the e in the, before a vowel; so do our dalesfolk. Tathens, themperor, thexperiens, are all written and pronounced according to the rules of good Cumberland; and saistow, seestow, for sayest thou, seest thou, are also of our manner. The dalesfolk always say seeste for see thou, look here; talking Chaucerian without knowing it. "Seeste, lass! t'kye's in't garth out by! hie thee ways an' put them oot!" or, "sayste sae? surely!" for "do you say so? surely!" with the last syllable strongly accented. Another word also well descended is wax, in the sense of to grow. "Ay! he waxes finely!" is the common expression for he grows well; but how the modern slang meaning of anger came to be given to it, I do not know.

Chaucer uses pure for very, and we of the dales have purely in the same sense; also gaily, which I do not find in the old writers. "I'se gaily weel," says Jobby; or more shortly, "I'se gaily;" or more shortly still, "gaily," if even yet more laconic than usual; and he has never a great flux of words; said with a side-fling of his head by way of salutation in the mode most used by him, as he swings his tall figure down the fells, with his colley at his heels, or gathering in the sheep far ahead. If the wind is rising as he walks, it is "soughing" in the trees and down the sharp ravines. Those two pictorial lines in the Knight's Tale,

> In which ther ran a swymbul in a swough,
> As it were a storm schuld berst every bough—

expressive of the sighing that ran through the deeper soughing of the winds, would be quite understood down in the dales; but "the cruel ire as reed as any gleed" would puzzle Jobby and all his household. For to him a glede is a kite, and he knows no other meaning—to the men and women of the fourteenth century it was a burning coal, a red-hot living ember; and to them the description held good, and the analogy was perfect. But to Jobby's understanding a red glede or kite would be difficult.

"Al ful of chirking was that sory place," says Chaucer; and "t' lite geslings' churking gaily amang t' bracken," says Jobby—chirking

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for chirping, or whispering, being one of those poetic words which never die out of the language of the people. Stynt or stint, for have done with, give over, or, more rightfully, "gie ower," is also a Cumberland word. "A! doughter stynt thyn heavynesse," says Dyane to Emelye the bright; and when the Reede calls out, "stint thi clappe!" any dalesman of them all would understand that quite as well as "haud thee clapper;" which would be his own natural form of enjoining silence—most probably with a thundering expletive for additional emphasis. The "A," too, as an exclamation, is quite north country. We never say Ah! but just the flat A, when we do not say "lo ye;" to which we are partial as a vehicle of feeling.

"Schal it be holde for a cast or elles for noon?" asks Child Gamelyn, when he wrestles with the doughty champion, and, flinging him by one of his "tornes," "kast hym on the left syde, that three ribbes to-brak;" just as any Musgrave or Graham might ask, after he has thrown his man at the Carlisle wrestling matches or the Wigton races. We are proud of our wrestling down in the dales, and maintain that ours is the only true form of that sport; that the Cornish hug and the Lancashire grip are both out of the right rule, and that we alone practise the "tornes"—we call them by other names now—in use when Robin Hood and Little John wrestled "under the grene schawes." Our Musgraves and Grahams would hold themselves "fouled" if they did what Pol, and Tre, and Pen think quite worthy play; and the Carlisle umpire would think twice before he allowed the victory to be claimed by Cornish cantrips or Lancashire sleights.

The Welsh would understand better than we the miller's description of the carpenter's young wife: "Hir mouthe was sweete as bragat is or meth," but, "wynsyng sche was as is a jolly colt," would come to us by virtue of that word wynsyng; though we would call it winsome, like our friends over the Border—to northern ears one of the pleasantest words in the language. If a lassie belonging to us is not winsome, she is nothing of all that woman should be. She may be douce, and honest, and clever, and well favoured; but if she is not winsome, she is like all the virtues without charity. The "riche gnof;" who boarded students at the University, would find himself lengthened by a syllable if he came into Jobby's hands, and would be a gonof; said with an emphasis that would be quite worth an adjective; and the "persone obstinat," whom the "pore persoun" "wolde snybbe scharply for the nones," might be found, so far as obstinacy went, wherever the holy man chose to look for him in the dales.

Siker is Chaucerian for sure; it is good Cumberland, and good Scotch (as are many expressions here noted) also; and we "mak siker" when we make a rope or a bargain, or anything else sure. Hals is neck in the older tongue, and hawse, or hause, is the modern representative, for the most part given only to the sick or neck between two hills. Algates, or always, has its motif preserved in the dale word of gate, for way—"Gang yer ain gate, ye lile donnet," is mither's formula for giving up to itself and destruction, by means of red cows and trout-holes, the "lile donnet" who will not be sufficiently obedient to maternal counsel. A "clicket" is Chaucerian for a key; and we have the verb to click for to snatch. "He clicked it clean oot o' my hand;" "Nay, what he oop an' clicked me off my feet afoor I kenned whaur I war!"—both clicket and click probably phonetic in the beginning, as, indeed, are most of the early words in all languages—as it is to be supposed were all the first words when men were beginning to learn the use of speech, and taking natural sounds as the models to be imitated.

The frere in the Sompnour's tale says, "Have I of your softe brede but a schivere." And Aggy, upon the fells yonder, gives her bairns slivers, or shivers, of bread; and sometimes Harry-lad-shives, when more generous than usual—generous to the extent of a whole round, instead of the mommocks or gobbets, in general all that she allows of soft bread. "Clap-bread" (oat-cake), or "snap and rattle," are good enough for bairns, "mak fine lads div they; gie 'em bluid an' banes, not fleck-milk an' putty. The softer pronunciation of ir, in the composite of three, is comparatively a modernism; and one which has not found its way yet down among the mountains; where we still say thretty for thirty, and thretteen for thirteen, all the same as in the fourteenth century, when the polite world was not afraid of a little roughness on the tongue. Indeed, we Cumbrians are fond of putting the "r" before the vowel where the south places it after; as in this same instance of thretty for thirty, crully for curly, crud for curd, and the like. Our Scottish neighbours do the same.

Necked and nicked are fell-side renderings of notched, for which the old Chaucerian word was nokked. A field of corn laid by the wind is said by us to be necked, and the swan with two necks is a corruption, the genesis of which is known to everybody.

THE SQUIRE'S TEMPER-TRAP.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

I.

THAT Taffey was a Welshman no one who had ever made an attempt to spell the locality in which he had been born and bred would venture to deny. But we can accompany the lyrist no further. Taffey was not a "thief." The piece of beef which formed his Sunday's dinner was not pilfered from my house nor anybody else's. Taffey stole nothing but the hearty goodwill and liking of everybody that knew him. He was a swarthy fellow, on working-days, as you would desire to see; but when he came out on the Sabbath, close shaven, and in a shirt as white as his own conscience, smoking a Michaelmas daisy (his wife never

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permitted anything of a more exciting nature until after morning service), there are, I am warranted in saying, dukes—I repeat the expression, *dukes*—who have appeared to less advantage.

Taffey was, in fact, a blacksmith. The science of farriage (if there is no such word, there ought to be) was held to have attained its climax in the school of Taffey. Until nature should remodel hoofs, art could do no more to supply her deficiencies. His plates might be worn till nothing remained between the wearer's hoofs and the hard Welsh roads, but a wafer bright as silver, bendable into a double ring for your wife's little finger; yet they were never lost nor loosened. It was an often-quoted saying of the squire's (uttered, if you please, in a moment of enthusiasm, but never formally recanted), that if he—Theophilus Hurbandine, of Llbwyddcoed, in the shire of Flint—resided habitually in Grosvenor-square, he would, nevertheless, send down every horse in his stable to be shod, as usual, by Edward Taffey.

Taffey loved his business. Business returned his affection. That shed of his was never vacant for half an hour together.

"Bless the brutes! Wheer they comes from *I* do' know—nather why they comes to *me* so thick," would Taffey remark, sweeping the moisture from his brow with the dingy turban formed by his tucked-up sleeve. And still the stamping of impatient hoofs and switching of uneasy tails went on from morning till night; the fire never ceasing its roar, the little crowd of idlers round the half-door of the forge never diminishing, until boys stood in their fathers' places with their fingers, like those fathers', in their mouths—their eyes carrying on the wink at the sparkling fount of fire, into another generation.

It will be readily believed that Taffey was a man well-to-do. Blacksmiths, when not given to drink, are almost always thriving men. So, I have observed, are millers. And whereas, nine times in ten, according to statistics about to be taken, your miller has a lovely child with blue eyes and a skin white as her father's meal-sacks, so, in this instance, our blacksmith had a blooming daughter, with a cheek as brown as, though considerably smoother than, that of her respected sire.

Katy was the prettiest girl, known of, from Llbwyddcoed to Abertllhery. Her hair was of the colour of the horse-chestnut fresh from his rough green overcoat; and, with regard to the blush with which, among many other pretty things, she returned from market excursions, on something that resembled a bale of bearskins on castors, but was popularly believed to be a pony within—as touching, I say, that blush, I can only aver that, were I a woman, I would rather wear that natural rose for six months certain than be turned out, beautiful for ever, from the hands of the most accomplished dispenser of loveliness that ever compounded a Bond-street wash.

Next to her Hebe face, and when you had sufficiently admired her lithe supple figure, you would probably find yourself attracted by Katy's foot—not so much on account of the fascination of a pair of bright steel buckles, once the property of her grandmother, which it was her whim to wear, as of the symmetry of the member they adorned, and the light decisive tread, displaying a grace no dancing-mistress could have taught. Katy was graceful from her very cradle. The honest folks about her admired before they well knew why.

As she grew up, this peculiar grace—it was almost dignity—of manner and movement procured her the title of "my lady": invented, it was believed, by her father himself; and by this she was generally known, it being considered merely anticipative of what was to follow. Fairy godmothers have still adherents in Wales, and it was an article of faith with a large portion of Katy's friends, that the benignant influence which had conferred such attractive gifts upon "my lady" in infancy, would, in due course, bring forward the expectant prince, or other eminent person, destined to claim Katy for his bride.

The pew tenanted by the family of Mr. Taffey being situated just within the porch of the little village church, its occupants were usually among the first who issued forth. But they were too well held and popular to be suffered to escape thus easily. Overtaken and surrounded, pleasant were the conversations that ensued around a certain stile at which Mr. Taffey's Sunday route diverged from the general way, and led across the meadows towards a little farm he rented from the squire, Mr. Hurbandine aforesaid, and at which he always spent the remainder of his day of rest.

Many were the greetings from the passers-by, and none more cordial than from the squire himself, who, walking between his handsome haughty-looking sons, suspended a rather animated conversation in which he was engaged with the elder, in order to exchange a word of kindness with his humble friend.

"Trot up to the place to-morrow, Taffey, if you have half an hour to spare," he turned to add, "and speak to me about Ten-Tree Meadow. Never mind Hardham; you and I will settle the matter between us."

Taffey bowed; but, though he was pleased with the squire's affability, his countenance was somehow overcast, as he gazed after the retreating three.

The sons of Mr. Hurbandine, of Llbwyddcoed, were thought to have inherited, with their mother's patrician blood, something of her patrician pride. She was a Vere-Vavasour. To have been at once a Vere *and* a Vavasour might well have turned an ordinary brain. Something had affected the poor lady's; and, as one of her fancies was that her veins were filled with the brightest Prussian blue, it might be fairly concluded that pride of ancestry was not devoid of blame in the matter.

Lady Geraldine was now at rest with a select and polished circle of her exalted line, who enjoyed a mausoleum all to themselves, in a picturesque corner of the ancestral domain,

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where a rank of stately yews and cypresses, representing the stalwart lacqueys who had once kept aloof the tide of common humanity, shut carefully out the vulgar little ivy-covered church, to which were merely entrusted the marble virtues and granite honours of the departed V. V.s.

The squire was a good squire; and, shunning none of those mysterious responsibilities wealth is supposed to bring, lived much among his tenantry, and made his forty thousand a year as serviceable to the interests of the land and its cultivators, as his lights permitted. Of course, he was in parliament—a back-bone conservative, and—need it be added?—voted with his diminishing party, like a man. Reports are silent as to any oratorical display. Why? He had a weakness so great as to be little short of calamity—that of giving way to gusts of sudden passion, terrible in their intensity, and rendered more grievous to witness by the disproportion to them of the exciting cause. These paroxysms were fortunately very rare, and the poor squire's subsequent remorse, not to mention the profuse liberality with which he strove to atone in some measure for the wrongs his passion had inflicted, went far towards reconciling those about him to the occasional interruption of harmony.

Lady Geraldine was the only magician who could control these paroxysms. This was not by reason of her exalted rank. The squire had no particular aversion to Vere-Vavasours and made many of the race welcome to his halls; but he saw no more in them than ordinary (sometimes *very* ordinary) gentlemen, and treated Jack Hornidge, whose genius resided exclusively in a profound judgment of "beasts," with the same distinction that was paid to the most illustrious of Lady Geraldine's lineage.

In the very height of the squire's fury, his lady had been seen to raise her thin white hand, without a word. As if stunned with the dint of some fell weapon, her husband would reel back, his hands unclenched, the fire dying out of his eyes, the fierce invective faltering into silence. None understood the spell, for even Prussian blue has its virtues, and Lady Geraldine suffered none to see that when, in lifting her hand, the bracelet slid back, it revealed a white scar. In the first passionate outburst after their marriage, Hurbandine had seized his wife's arm with such inconsiderate violence, that her bracelet, unclasping, cut into the delicate flesh, causing a painful wound and an indelible scar. *This* was the remembrance that, in moments of the most unreasoning fury, could strike down the manly squire, shocked, shamed, discomfited.

Hence was it that the Lady Geraldine, with all her pride, was a favourite with those who saw how promptly this soothing influence was exercised, at need; and when it was the poor lady's fate to become, as we have said, insane, the loss of her benign interposition was felt by not a few. For tempers are quick, in Wales, and not even the respect due to a landlord could always overcome the resentment excited by that landlord's bearing, in his hurricanous rages.

We must hasten back to the party at the stile.

When the squire and his sons passed them, as described, the younger, Rochford, had joined in his sire's greeting, with the addition of a rather saucy smile and a glance, a trifle more prolonged than was absolutely necessary, at the blushing Katy. As to his brother, he had neither bowed nor looked, but strode haughtily forward, hardly checked by his father's momentary pause.

"Something wrong with squire again," remarked Mr. Taffey, moodily, as he turned away "Wants a nail, somewheer. 'Tis Mr. Rochford, I'm afeerd."

"Well, now, I don't think there's so much harm in *him*," said Mrs. Taffey, on whose frank, pleasant face an expression of reproach or suspicion looked so little at home, that it was instantly detected. "I declare to goodness, no. A nicer-mannered, freer-spoken, merrier-laughed——"

"Hallo! here's a bust of elokence!" ejaculated Mr. Taffey, stopping short, the more conveniently to admire the speaker. "Why, Maggie, you've been a-borrerin of David Apreece! You're a good creeter, and never censers anybody. Consekently, when you *has* to find fault, you doos it by praising thissen too much, and saying nuthen, or less, o' *that*'n. That's how *I* reads you," added Mr. Taffey, triumphantly, for his one vanity was a (supposed) gift of divining character. "And who is *that*'n? Why, who coold it be, but Mr. Gerald? And what's *he* done, for to offend you? That's how *I* reads it," concluded the worthy smith, with, it must be owned, less point than usual, his interrogative look proving that he did not read it at all.

"I never said he done anything," replied his wife; "I only said, Ed'ard, that a nicer-mannered, freer-spoken, merrier-l——"

"I knows wot you *said*," retorted Mr. Taffey. "Question is, wot you *didn't* say! Freer-spoken! he's a — trot on, a little, Katy, my pet — deuced deal *too* free with some of us, specially such as weers caps and ribbings. Merry! Course he is. 'Tis a joke to *him*; that's how *I* reads it. He'd better take to another line o' business, and not be hanging s' much about the village, turning the heads—— Did you see your nice-mannered gent making eyes at — at *that*'n?" (Mr. Taffey gulped something, and shot out his brawny fist in the direction of Katy's twinkling heels), "making the lass turn as red's a peony!"

"I saw it, but I'm not afeerd," said the mother. "She don't like it. That's all."

"When I was young," observed Mr. Taffey, "when a young 'oman turned as red's a rose, she *did* like it."

"It's not him—Mr. Rochford. There!" said his wife, "I outs with it. Why, you blessed old babby! can't you see? It's Mr. Gerald!"

"Whe-ee-ew!" whistled the student of character; "here's a kittle full! And very hockard fishes they be. Coom, how is it all, old 'oman? Queer that I, as reads things quicker than most, shouldn't have put my finger on

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what *you* sees! The girl's took by that haughty, stuck-up fellow, wot despises his own father, 'cos he wan't born a lord? Is *that* it?"

"Well, that's a little of it," replied his wife. "I don't think but 'tis all on his side. Why, when they passed, just now, the young squire didn't give her so much as a look!"

"*I* see. Do you think, old 'oman, nobody has eyes in their heads but *you?* He doon't care a rusty nail for her. That's how I reads it," said Mr. Taffey.

"You reads it upside down, then," replied his helpmate; "or p'raps you doon't read far enough. That means, he *do* like the girl; that he's afeerd of 's father; that Mr. Rochford knows it, and likes to let the child *see* he does. Then, they do say that Mr. Rochford an't best friends with his brother. Now, *he's* the squire's favourite, and if there come any terrible to-do between the father and t'other, which's temper's as bad, one as t'other," explained Mrs. Taffey, "Mr. Rochford might come for to be squire of Llbwyddcoed; and if Katy——"

"That's like readin' to the end of the vollum, and a little furder," replied Mr. Taffey. "Well, well, the long and short of it's this: I 'ont have these town swells—no, narrer one of 'em, squire or lord—a-dancing 'bout our Katy. I'm going up to squire's to morrow—you heerd'n ask me — about Ten-tree Meadow, and if I don't tell'n——"

"Never be such a noggerhead!" exclaimed his wife, in great alarm. "Squire have been very bad lately, that's certain. Something have gone wrong, making his furies worse than they was ever know'd to be. Nobody's sure of him, poor gentleman. One moment as smooth as—as butter, the next like a mad thing. Don't think of speaking to him—now don't ye, Edward."

"Take the admonition, O vicine (that is, O my neighbour, whence 'vicinity')," piped a small voice at Mr. Taffey's elbow. It was that of Mr. David Morgan Apreece, the village schoolmaster. "Isn't she your 'placens uxor'?"

"Well, she's summot in that line o' business," replied Mr. Taffey, guardedly; "'specially when the wind's nor'-east. We was just talking of the squire. My missis have heerd he's been in his tempers, horrid."

"Let him get another wife," said Mr. Apreece, decisively.

"A wife!"

"While my lady lived," continued the schoolmaster, "the squire's tantrums were few, and over directly. They never got beyond *her*. She caught 'em, like rats, or such vermin, and turned 'em out where they couldn't hurt anybody. My wife called her the squire's temper-trap."

"I've *seen* her shut him up," said Mr. Taffey, "in less than half a jiffy! She only up with her hand. Curiousest thing I ever see! I wanted to try it on my missis, but she doon't give a man a chance."

"Get the squire married, and all's right again," said Mr. Apreece.

"Well, I'm a-goin' up to hall to-morrow," said Mr. Taffey, "and, if squire asks my opinion on the pint o' marriage, I'll give't him hot and strong. I can't begin the subject, 'cos it doon't belong to Ten-tree Meadow!"

"Do your best, then," said Mr. Apreece, laughing. "Here I must leave you, neighbours."

II.

As they neared the little farm-house, a figure that had been dimly noticed flitting—let us rather say, lurking—among the trees came to light, in the stalwart person of young Thomas Fullafield. Even in his well-brushed velveteen coat, and waistcoat of a pattern so rich and varied that it might have passed for an attempt to epitomise the flora of South Wales, Thomas looked every cubic inch the lout he was. That he was in love with Katy, and had as much hope of winning her as of allying himself with the reigning house of Britain, was written legibly upon his broad face.

Sharp-sighted Mrs. Taffey probably knew *that*, and, if she did not warn off the unlucky Thomas, her reasons were threefold. The matter had not been presented to her official notice. The attempt by a person of Mr. Fullafield's mental calibre and general style to win such a fay as Katy deserved all the punishment disappointment could entail. Finally, the rumour that sturdy Thomas Fullafield, whose fistic prowess was county-wide, was keeping company (or persuading himself that he did so) with Katy Taffey, was serviceable in warning off many troublesome youths inclined to venture too dangerously near that pretty Catherine-wheel.

Thomas, however, was human. He was also practical. Unlike those troubadours who preferred obdurate mistresses—else what would become of their melodious despair?—Mr. Fullafield saw no fun in unrequited passion. He had now been for nearly two years dancing—or, to speak more accurately, prowling—about Miss Taffey. Jokes, he had reason to apprehend, were being cut at his expense. Thomas had resolved to bring matters to a crisis of some sort; and, accordingly, throwing an extra amount of splendour into his attire, and of sullenness (meant for determination) into his broad visage, he marched, as we have seen, upon the foe.

At the first sight of the vanguard—Katy—Thomas was thrown into such disorder, that he fell back upon the plantation, but, rallying, was the first to commence the action.

"Mornin', miss."

"Good morning, Mr. Thomas," said Katy, showing her pearly teeth in such wise that Thomas's teeth danced in his head. "You'll dine with us? Father's just behind." And she vanished into the house.

Thomas encountered the main body with his usual duck and salutation:

"Mornin', Mrs. Taffey. Mornin', Mr. Taffey."

Greetings exchanged, Mrs. Taffey remarked (as though his coming were a matter of course), "You'll take a snap with us, Mr. Thomas?" And, without waiting for an answer, followed her daughter.

A dreadful feeling that this one, of many "snaps," might be his final one in that house,

kept Mr. Fullafield silent for a moment, when the smith said:

"The women woon't be ready yet awhile. Coom and look at the cow-'us I've run up t'other side the slush."

Thomas glanced at his own apparel, and thought that this agreeable excursion might have been more happily timed. There's a season for everything. Slush and a cow-house are excellent things in their way, but do not harmonise well with an exalted condition of mind; nor is their aroma, though healthy, suggestive of tender and poetic sentiment. But the opportunity was too good to be lost. The two gentlemen walked away.

Thomas's great pale blue eyes would have opened wider still had he known that the cow-'us was a myth, and the smith no more intent than himself on soiling his Sunday boots in the locality he had described. Mr. Fullafield had been the last subject of conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Taffey, as they concluded their walk; and the former, like Thomas, had taken a resolution. Mr. Fullafield had been enough "about the place," and the worthy smith, who knew his daughter's feeling, and drew a wide distinction between an honest, though misplaced, affection, and a fine-gentleman caprice for a rustic beauty, resolved to warn off Thomas, for his own good, as he would have done the squire's sons, in Katy's interests.

Both strode on for a moment in silence. Then Thomas, fearing that the slush, to which they were undoubtedly approaching, might interfere with the dialogue, commenced it.

It was a peculiarity, well known to his friends, that though Thomas might have been in conversation with one of them for an hour, he always commenced any new and interesting topic with a repetition of the morning greeting; consequently,

"Mornin', feother," said Thomas.

"Mornin', Thomas," responded Mr. Taffey; then making, so to speak, a butt at the subject, added, "but I'm not thy feother, nor an't like to be."

"Now, don't ye say that," said Thomas, in a choky voice.

"I say 't, and I mean 't; and 'tis for your sake I doos say 't," returned his companion. "Come now, my lad, here's good two year you've been tryin' to put the shoe upon the wrong horse, and she won't have it, at no price."

"That ben't fair, I do say," said Thomas, warmly. "I've called you feother, 'fore her face, and she never——"

"If you'd called me your grandmother 'twould ha' been all the same," replied the plain-spoken smith. "Katy wean't ha' none o' thee."

"If Mrs. Taffey and yourself was to——"

"Stop a moment," said Mr. Taffey, halting suddenly. "Putt the twitch on Katy, to make her marry a man she don't want? Not if I knows it. Now, lad, I doon't want to quar'l wi' thee. 'Twas natteral thou liked'st our lass—equal natteral she didn't take to *thee*; for though there be a kist o' good in thee, when one gets at it, thou'rt a bit thick in the rind. When Katy marries, 'twill be somethin' different from thee. Coom, now, you says to yourself, 'Taffey's right,' you says. 'I'll go wheer I'll be cared about, and be looked up to, and be made much of, and have trouble took concernin'," concluded Mr. Taffey, argumentatively. "That's how *I* reads you."

Mr. Fullafield did not answer. His chin had sunk upon his breast, and his eyes were fixed upon his gorgeous waistcoat. It seemed to him that even the unconscious garment had been affected by the shock, and that the roses and sunflowers shot up a lurid, angry glow, as if they said, "Thomas, Thomas, was it for *this* that such as we were wrought and worn?"

What other thoughts passed through his brain we (who have been singularly successful in attachments) cannot say. But when Thomas did look up, his face was such that the stout smith involuntarily recoiled, and asked him what was the matter.

"Matter! nothing," said Thomas, with a grin.

"Nothin' don't turn a man the colour of a biled turnip!" remarked Mr. Taffey. "Coom, my lad, take 't like a man. No need, 'cause you can't marry our Katy, that we shouldn't be good neighbours," said the worthy smith. "Coom, let's trot home. I think we needn't go to the cow-'ouse?"

"I think not," said Mr. Fullafield.

"Then coom to dinner."

"I've had dinner enow, for one day," replied Thomas. And the expression that had shocked the smith came back into his face. Mr. Taffey did not press his invitation.

At the turn, up to the farm-house, they parted.

"You'll coom up to forge to-morrow, lad, with a smile on your face, 'stead of a glower like bottled thunder; and you'll say, 'All right, Taffey, *you* know'd best.' That's how I reads *you*," said the smith. "But don't coom early. I'm going up to squire's."

The other turned round suddenly.

"Going up to squire's! What for?"

"That's tellin'" replied Mr. Taffey, jocosely, and without any real desire to make a mystery of it. "P'raps about a meadow, or—or marriage," he added, smiling, as the suggestion of the little schoolmaster occurred to him.

Young Fullafield looked at him fixedly for an instant, then, without speaking, turned and walked away.

"Going to squire's? To talk o' marriage?" he muttered. "Whose marriage? *Her's?* They call her 'my lady,' and they 'spect to make her one. I'll spoil *that* game." And Thomas shot back at the farm where his lost love was innocently boiling leeks for the Sunday dinner a glance so fiery that it might have ignited the thatch above her.

He had loved the girl, according to his nature, heartily; and love, being in all essential points, the same, whether it be clad in satin or

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in fustian, expressed in doggrel or in Idylls. Mr. Fullafield's wrong would have commanded all our sympathy, but for the manner in which he took it. There is a pathos, a dignity, in the tranquil sufferer, which is wholly wanting in the man who runs a muck.

III.

Mr. Taffey, on presenting himself, next morning, at the hall, was shown into the study. The squire had been walking up and down for some minutes. Now and then, he would pause to scowl upward at one or other of the Vere-Vavasours that adorned the wall, whose self-complacent but rather vacant faces returned the look with delightful indifference. There was another picture, a gay gallant wooing, or affecting to woo, a peasant girl, and this appeared to be a favourite of Mr. Hurbandine's; for, as he gazed, the hard expression faded from his countenance, and gave way to an approving smile.

"Ten-tree Meadow is yours, from Lady-day," he called out, the moment Mr. Taffey's nose was visible within the door. "That's settled. Now come and look at *this*."

Mr. Taffey looked, and expressed his decided opinion that the young lady was a nice, modest-mannered young woman, sure enough, while the gentleman showed a good fall in the back, and blood (he thought) about the pasterns.

"Right, Taffey, said the squire. "He *had* blood, and, booby as he looks, was a gentleman, which is more," he muttered, "than I would say of all his kin. He lost, to Miss Sukey Bubbs, the cotter's daughter, his heart, which was supposed to be about the size of a marrow-fat pea. But it proved bigger; for he married her."

"Good luck to 'em!" cried the honest smith as cordially as if the pair had been just starting on their wedding tour. "They was happy, I hope, sir?"

"Merry as grasshoppers, their live-long days," said the squire. "They 've been dead these fifty years; but all the fun of the family died out of it with Sukey Bubbs, that is, Lady Vavasour, the cotter's daughter. They've been a dull lot since, proud as peacocks, and as worthless," he added, sinking his voice as before. "Our blood is *too* good, Taffey; there's the secret of it."

"Well, I don't think but *that* perpetiwal breeding in-and-in an't no good, in the end," remarked the smith. "A cross that do give substance——"

"That's a nice-browed lassie of yours, Taffey," said the squire, suddenly changing his topic.

"So I've heerd 'm say," returned the smith, trying to look as if he hadn't quite made up his own mind on the subject.

"Blue eyes and cherry lips are rather abundant in our neighbourhood, I think," continued Mr. Hurbandine. "My wife used to tell me the Llbwyddcoed girls were as good and modest as they were pretty."

"They 'as good mothers," said Mr. Taffey, significantly. "That's how I reads it."

"Right. They cannot be too careful. Danger's everywhere," remarked the squire. "These young fellows, boy-guardsmen and the like, who do me the honour to come down, with my sons, to recruit their exhausted frames with wholesome food and twelve o'clock bed, won't disdain to chuck a country chin."

"It's werry kind of 'em, I'm sure, squire!" said Mr. Taffey, his eyes glistening with his own warm speech.

"Kind!"

"Seeing 'tis a game we don't play at, in these parts," explained the smith, "and guardsmen's heads an't quite so hard as our fistes, if they come to disagree."

"You speak warmly. Have you anything to —to complain of, in that way?" demanded the squire.

"Yes, sir, I have," was the frank reply. But then he hesitated.

"Out with it, man!" said Mr. Hurbandine, his face assuming the expression recognised in the family, as indicative of an approaching "squall."

While Mr. Taffey still stood, silently debating whether he would speak what was in his mind, or no, the squire pointed suddenly to a writing-table:

"Look at those scrawls. Do you know the hand. No," he continued, hastily; and, striding across the room, he crumpled up the letters, and flung them in a heap on the fire. "Look you, Taffey, sundry nameless individuals, whose pothooks it has cost me an hour's labour to decipher, accuse me of sanctioning (I presume, by my non-interference) acts of impertinence and intrusion on the part of my London guests—my sons, I take it, included—which, if persisted in, may lead to painful consequences, and, at the least, engender feelings the very reverse of those which have hitherto happily subsisted between the tenantry and the hall. This, in plain English, and with a certain regard to grammar and significance, is the purport of the letters I have destroyed. Tell me all about it."

"'Tan't such as I *can* tell, squire," replied Mr. Taffey. "Howsoever, what I doos know I'll say. First place, I can't make out who's been and written them letters. There's not many of us as doos much in that way, 'cept my wissiney."

"Your what?"

"My neighbour," translated Mr. Taffey—"David Apreece. It wan't him. He an't the man for to write anything he 'oodn't put his name to; and in very big letters, too, specially his capital A's. It's a great thing, squire, is hedication."

Mr. Hurbandine admitted that it had its advantageous side; but, at present, willed Mr. Taffey to keep to the point. Had he, or not, reason to believe that the villagers had taken offence at some indiscretion on the part of the visitors at the hall? And what did he, Taffey, mean, by saying that he himself had cause to complain?

Thus urged, the smith blurted out the truth.

It so happened that the valley and hamlet of

Llbwyddcoed were, as the squire had hinted, rather celebrated for the beauty of the rustic damseldom. Many, down to the lowest cottage class, boasted respectable descent; and all, as is noticeable in parts of the principality, showed tokens of a haughty and independent spirit, especially towards those who used them with what they regarded as undue familiarity. The manly squire approved and fostered this feeling; and nothing was more calculated to evoke his anger than any complaint like those addressed to him by his anonymous correspondents. We cannot be surprised that Mr. Taffey, aware of this, confessed, with a reluctance and embarrassment unusual with him, that that there *was* something in the alleged grievance that needed to be put to rights. Gentlemen of polished aspect, with whiskers of paly gold, shooting-coats of fashionable design, and highly condescending manners, had discovered picturesque beauties in the little hamlet, which had escaped less observant visitors. A lounge and a smoke in the immediate purlieus of Llbwyddcoed had grown to be an apparent necessity with the squire's male guests. Familiarity with danger leads to contempt of it. Despite their habitual reserve and self-respect, the rustic belles soon began to notice, without alarm, the Honourable Tom Castleton's singular predilection for hollyhocks, and receive, without resentment, my young Lord Leatherhead's humble request for information respecting the manufacture of goats'-milk cheese. What harm could there possibly be in youths who, even in depraved London, could maintain a pure and healthy affection for hollyhocks and cheese? We need not follow up the story pace by pace. The curly whisker and the flattering tongue carried the day—until, on the part of fathers, brothers, and sweethearts, jealousy and distrust succeeded to gratified pride. There had been one or two serious disturbances; and it was understood, in the village, that, among other individuals "cautioned," my Lord Leatherhead had been openly requested to complete his dairy education elsewhere; whilst the Honourable Tom Castleton was in the receipt of almost daily invitations of a pugilistic character, which it had become exceedingly difficult to decline.

Such was the substance of Mr. Taffey's representations, which could scarcely have been given in his own words, without retarding the narrative. As he spoke, the gloom deepened on his hearer's face, and a lurid gleam, as the squire raised his eyes for an instant and dropped them again, showed that a storm-burst was at hand. He was striving against his own rising passion.

"You—you spoke of yourself, Taffey," he said, in a stifled voice. "Let me understand that none of these lisping jack-puddings have insulted *her*—your pretty Katy, I mean?"

The smith's forehead flushed. He hesitated.

"Speak out, man!" said the squire. (An idea seemed to flash upon him.) "My sons! Do they—does either of them—dare——? I see it *is* so. *Which?*" he thundered, starting from his chair.

His imperious tone roused the spirit of the sturdy smith.

"Mr. Rochford, then," he shouted, in a voice as loud as the squire's, "since you *must* have it, he's dawdling and dodging about our place, more than I and my missis like—or the girl, either, for that matter. I was thinking of speaking to one or t'other of you; and now you've heerd it, why, take notice on it."

And Mr. Taffey caught up his hat from the ground.

Nothing checks a man's passion more effectually than the unexpectedly finding his interlocutor in a greater passion still.

The squire grew pale and quiet, and re-seated himself in his chair.

"Leave me now, my man. Go, my old friend," he continued, quickly. "I will see to this matter. There shall be no more cause of complaint. I have known your pretty Katy as the best-behaved, as she is the prettiest, girl in all the county. She and I have been friends from her cradle. Sukey Bubbs—Lady Vavasour, I mean—must have been Katy herself at fifteen. No fopling that bears my name, and is ashamed of it, shall turn *her* pretty head, and torment her innocent heart, for the amusement of an idle hour! Leave it to me."

"'Twas as precious near a blow up between us as ever I see," thought Mr. Taffey, as he walked home; "but I've shod'n nicely all round, and he'll do for a while. Squire's not so wicious, and tenderer in the mouth than he was—leastwise, with a good hand upon him. Hallo! School up already, wissiney?" he added, as the little schoolmaster skipped across the road and joined him.

"We begin betimes, you see," said Mr. Apreece. "'Diluculo surgere,' you know."

"No great luck in going to a surgery, I should think," remarked Mr. Taffey.

"You've arranged that matter with the squire?" inquired the schoolmaster, with a smile.

"What matter, wissiney?"

"About his marrying again, you know."

"We was talkin' of summot else," replied Mr. Taffey, "but, now you speak of it——"

He stood still suddenly, and looked in the other's face with a curious expression.

"Now I speak of it——" prompted Mr. Apreece.

"I've seen onlikelier things come to pass," said the smith. And they parted.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOING down to the front door, I met the Sergeant on the steps.

It went against the grain with me, after what had passed between us, to show him that I felt any sort of interest in his proceedings. In spite of myself, however, I felt an interest that there was no resisting. My sense of dignity sank from under me, and out came the words: "What news from Frizinghall?"

"I have seen the Indians," answered Sergeant Cuff. "And I have found out what Rosanna bought privately in the town, on Thursday last. The Indians will be set free on Wednesday in next week. There isn't a doubt on my mind, and there isn't a doubt on Mr. Murthwaite's mind, that they came to this place to steal the Moonstone. Their calculations were all thrown out, of course, by what happened in the house on Wednesday night; and they have no more to do with the actual loss of the jewel than you have. But I can tell you one thing, Mr. Betteredge—if *we* don't find the Moonstone, *they* will. You have not heard the last of the three jugglers yet."

Mr. Franklin came back from his walk as the Sergeant said those startling words. Governing his curiosity better than I had governed mine, he passed us without a word, and went on into the house.

As for me, having already dropped my dignity, I determined to have the whole benefit of the sacrifice. "So much for the Indians," I said. "What about Rosanna, next?"

Sergeant Cuff shook his head.

"The mystery in that quarter is thicker than ever," he said. "I have traced her to a shop at Frizinghall, kept by a linendraper named Maltby. She bought nothing whatever at any of the other drapers' shops, or at any milliners' or tailors' shops; and she bought nothing at Maltby's but a piece of long cloth. She was very particular in choosing a certain quality. As to quantity, she bought enough to make a nightgown."

"Whose nightgown?" I asked.

"Her own, to be sure. Between twelve and three, on the Thursday morning, she must have slipped down to your young lady's room, to settle the hiding of the Moonstone while all the rest of you were in bed. In going back to her own room, her nightgown must have brushed the wet paint on the door. She couldn't wash out the stain; and she couldn't safely destroy the nightgown—without first providing another like it, to make the inventory of her linen complete."

"What proves that it was Rosanna's nightgown?" I objected.

"The material she bought for making the substitute dress," answered the Sergeant. "If it had been Miss Verinder's nightgown, she would have had to buy lace, and frilling, and Lord knows what besides; and she wouldn't have had time to make it in one night. Plain long cloth means a plain servant's nightgown. No, no, Mr. Betteredge—all that is clear enough. The pinch of the question is—why, after having provided the substitute dress, does she hide the smeared nightgown, instead of destroying it? If the girl won't speak out, there is only one way of settling the difficulty. The hiding-place at the Shivering Sand must be searched—and the true state of the case will be discovered there."

"How are you to find the place?" I inquired.

"I am sorry to disappoint you," said the Sergeant—"but that's a secret which I mean to keep to myself."

(Not to irritate your curiosity, as he irritated mine, I may here inform you that he had come back from Frizinghall provided with a search-warrant. His experience in such matters told him that Rosanna was, in all probability, carrying about her a memorandum of the hiding-place, to guide her, in case she returned to it, under changed circumstances and after a lapse of time. Possessed of this memorandum, the Sergeant would be furnished with all that he could desire.)

"Now, Mr. Betteredge," he went on, "suppose we drop speculation, and get to business. I told Joyce to have an eye on Rosanna. Where is Joyce?"

Joyce was the Frizinghall policeman, who had been left by Superintendent Seegrave at Sergeant Cuff's disposal. The clock struck two, as he put the question; and, punctual to the

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moment, the carriage came round to take Miss Rachel to her aunt's.

"One thing at a time," said the Sergeant, stopping me as I was about to send in search of Joyce. "I must attend to Miss Verinder first."

As the rain was still threatening, it was the close carriage that had been appointed to take Miss Rachel to Frizinghall. Sergeant Cuff beckoned Samuel to come down to him from the rumble behind.

"You will see a friend of mine waiting among the trees, on this side of the lodge-gate," he said. "My friend, without stopping the carriage, will get up into the rumble with you. You have nothing to do but to hold your tongue, and shut your eyes. Otherwise, you will get into trouble."

With that advice, he sent the footman back to his place. What Samuel thought I don't know. It was plain, to my mind, that Miss Rachel was to be privately kept in view from the time she left our house—if she did leave it. A watch set on my young lady! A spy behind her in the rumble of her mother's carriage! I could have cut my own tongue out for having forgotten myself so far as to speak to Sergeant Cuff.

The first person to come out of the house was my lady. She stood aside, on the top step, posting herself there to see what happened. Not a word did she say, either to the Sergeant or to me. With her lips closed, and her arms folded in the light garden cloak which she had wrapped round her on coming into the air, there she stood, as still as a statue, waiting for her daughter to appear.

In a minute more, Miss Rachel came down stairs—very nicely dressed in some soft yellow stuff, that set off her dark complexion, and clipped her tight (in the form of a jacket) round the waist. She had a smart little straw hat on her head, with a white veil twisted round it. She had primrose-coloured gloves, that fitted her hands like a second skin. Her beautiful black hair looked as smooth as satin under her hat. Her little ears were like rosy shells—they had a pearl dangling from each of them. She came swiftly out to us, as straight as a lily on its stem, and as lithe and supple in every movement she made as a young cat. Nothing that I could discover was altered in her pretty face, but her eyes and her lips. Her eyes were brighter and fiercer than I liked to see; and her lips had so completely lost their colour and their smile that I hardly knew them again. She kissed her mother in a hasty and sudden manner on the cheek. She said, "Try to forgive me, mamma"—and then pulled down her veil over her face so vehemently that she tore it. In another moment she had run down the steps, and had rushed into the carriage as if it was a hiding-place.

Sergeant Cuff was just as quick on his side. He put Samuel back, and stood before Miss Rachel, with the open carriage-door in his hand, at the instant when she settled herself in her place.

"What do you want?" says Miss Rachel, from behind her veil.

"I want to say one word to you, miss," answered the Sergeant, "before you go. I can't presume to stop your paying a visit to your aunt. I can only venture to say that your leaving us, as things are now, puts an obstacle in the way of my recovering your Diamond. Please to understand that; and now decide for yourself whether you go or stay."

Miss Rachel never even answered him. "Drive on, James!" she called out to the coachman.

Without another word, the Sergeant shut the carriage-door. Just as he closed it, Mr. Franklin came running down the steps. "Good-bye, Rachel," he said, holding out his hand.

"Drive on!" cried Miss Rachel, louder than ever, and taking no more notice of Mr. Franklin than she had taken of Sergeant Cuff.

Mr. Franklin stepped back thunderstruck, as well he might be. The coachman, not knowing what to do, looked towards my lady, still standing immovable on the top step. My lady, with anger and sorrow and shame all struggling together in her face, made him a sign to start the horses, and then turned back hastily into the house. Mr. Franklin, recovering the use of his speech, called after her, as the carriage drove off, "Aunt! you were quite right. Accept my thanks for all your kindness—and let me go."

My lady turned as though to speak to him. Then, as if distrusting herself, waved her hand kindly. "Let me see you, before you leave us, Franklin," she said, in a broken voice—and went on to her own room.

"Do me a last favour, Betteredge," says Mr. Franklin, turning to me, with the tears in his eyes. "Get me away to the train as soon as you can!"

He too went his way into the house. For the moment, Miss Rachel had completely unmanned him. Judge from that, how fond he must have been of her!

Sergeant Cuff and I were left face to face, at the bottom of the steps. The Sergeant stood with his face set towards a gap in the trees, commanding a view of one of the windings of the drive which led from the house. He had his hands in his pockets, and he was softly whistling the Last Rose of Summer to himself.

"There's a time for everything," I said, savagely enough. "This isn't a time for whistling."

At that moment, the carriage appeared in the distance, through the gap, on its way to the lodge-gate. There was another man, besides Samuel, plainly visible in the rumble behind.

"All right!" said the Sergeant to himself. He turned round to me. "It's no time for whistling, Mr. Betteredge, as you say. It's time to take this business in hand, now, without sparing anybody. We'll begin with Rosanna Spearman. Where is Joyce?"

We both called for Joyce, and received no

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answer. I sent one of the stable-boys to look for him.

"You heard what I said to Miss Verinder?" remarked the Sergeant, while we were waiting. "And you saw how she received it? I tell her plainly that her leaving us will be an obstacle in the way of my recovering her Diamond—and she leaves, in the face of that statement! Your young lady has got a travelling companion in her mother's carriage, Mr. Betteredge—and the name of it is, The Moonstone."

I said nothing. I only held on like death to my belief in Miss Rachel.

The stable-boy came back, followed—very unwillingly, as it appeared to me—by Joyce.

"Where is Rosanna Spearman?" asked Sergeant Cuff.

"I can't account for it, sir," Joyce began; "and I am very sorry. But somehow or other——"

"Before I went to Frizinghall," said the Sergeant, cutting him short, "I told you to keep your eye on Rosanna Spearman, without allowing her to discover that she was being watched. Do you mean to tell me that you have let her give you the slip?"

"I am afraid, sir," says Joyce, beginning to tremble, "that I was perhaps a little *too* careful not to let her discover me. There are such a many passages in the lower parts of this house——"

"How long is it since you missed her?"

"Nigh on an hour since, sir."

"You can go back to your regular business at Frizinghall," said the Sergeant, speaking just as composedly as ever, in his usual quiet and dreary way. "I don't think your talents are at all in our line, Mr. Joyce. Your present form of employment is a trifle beyond you. Good morning."

The man slunk off. I find it very difficult to describe how I was affected by the discovery that Rosanna Spearman was missing. I seemed to be in fifty different minds about it, all at the same time. In that state, I stood staring at Sergeant Cuff—and my powers of language quite failed me.

"No, Mr. Betteredge," said the Sergeant, as if he had discovered the uppermost thought in me, and was picking it out to be answered, before all the rest. "Your young friend, Rosanna, won't slip through my fingers so easily as you think. As long as I know where Miss Verinder is, I have the means at my disposal of tracing Miss Verinder's accomplice. I prevented them from communicating last night Very good. They will get together at Frizinghall, instead of getting together here. The present inquiry must be simply shifted (rather sooner than I had anticipated) from this house, to the house at which Miss Verinder is visiting. In the mean time, I'm afraid I must trouble you to call the servants together again."

I went round with him to the servants' hall. It is very disgraceful, but it is not the less true, that I had another attack of the detective fever when he said those last words. I forgot that I hated Sergeant Cuff. I seized him confidentially by the arm. I said, "For goodness sake, tell us what you are going to do with the servants now?"

The great Cuff stood stockstill, and addressed himself in a kind of melancholy rapture to the empty air.

"If this man," said the Sergeant (apparently meaning me), "only understood the growing of roses, he would be the most completely perfect character on the face of creation!" After that strong expression of feeling, he sighed, and put his arm through mine. "This is how it stands," he said, dropping down again to business. "Rosanna has done one of two things. She has either gone direct to Frizinghall (before I can get there), or she has gone first to visit her hiding-place at the Shivering Sand. The first thing to find out is, which of the servants saw the last of her before she left the house."

On instituting this inquiry, it turned out that the last person who had set eyes on Rosanna was Nancy, the kitchenmaid.

Nancy had seen her slip out with a letter in her hand, and stop the butcher's man who had just been delivering some meat at the back door. Nancy had heard her ask the man to post the letter when he got back to Frizinghall. The man had looked at the address, and had said it was a roundabout way of delivering a letter, directed to Cobb's Hole, to post it at Frizinghall—and that, moreover, on a Saturday, which would prevent the letter from getting to its destination until Monday morning. Rosanna had answered that the delivery of the letter being delayed till Monday was of no importance. The only thing she wished to be sure of was that the man would do what she told him. The man had promised to do it, and had driven away. Nancy had been called back to her work in the kitchen. And no other person had seen anything afterwards of Rosanna Spearman.

"Well?" I asked, when we were alone again.

"Well," says the Sergeant, "I must go to Frizinghall."

"About the letter, sir?"

"Yes. The memorandum of the hiding-place is in that letter. I must see the address at the post-office. If it is the address I suspect, I shall pay our friend Mrs. Yolland another visit on Monday next."

I went with the Sergeant to order the pony-chaise. In the stable-yard we got a new light thrown on the missing girl.

CHAPTER XIX.

The news of Rosanna's disappearance had, as it appeared, spread among the out-of-door servants. They too had made their inquiries; and they had just laid hands on a quick little imp, nicknamed "Duffy"—who was occasionally employed in weeding the garden, and who had seen Rosanna Spearman as lately as half an hour since. Duffy was certain that the girl had passed him

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in the fir-plantation, not walking, but *running* in the direction of the sea-shore.

"Does this boy know the coast hereabouts?" asked Sergeant Cuff.

"He has been born and bred on the coast," I answered.

"Duffy!" says the Sergeant, "do you want to earn a shilling? If you do, come along with me. Keep the pony-chaise ready, Mr. Betteredge, till I come back."

He started for the Shivering Sand, at a rate that my legs (though well enough preserved for my time of life) had no hope of matching. Little Duffy, as the way is with the young savages in our parts when they are in high spirits, gave a howl, and trotted off at the Sergeant's heels.

Here again, I find it impossible to give anything like a clear account of the state of my mind in the interval after Sergeant Cuff had left us. A curious and stupefying restlessness got possession of me. I did a dozen different needless things in and out of the house, not one of which I can now remember. I don't even know how long it was after the Sergeant had gone to the sands, when Duffy came running back with a message for me. Sergeant Cuff had given the boy a leaf torn out of his pocket-book, on which was written in pencil, "Send me one of Rosanna Spearman's boots, and be quick about it."

I despatched the first woman-servant I could find to Rosanna's room; and I sent the boy back to say that I myself would follow him with the boot.

This, I am well aware, was not the quickest way to take of obeying the directions which I had received. But I was resolved to see for myself what new mystification was going on, before I trusted Rosanna's boot in the Sergeant's hands. My old notion of screening the girl, if I could, seemed to have come back on me again, at the eleventh hour. This state of feeling (to say nothing of the detective fever) hurried me off, as soon as the boot was put in my hands, at the nearest approach to a run which a man turned seventy can reasonably hope to make.

As I got near the shore, the clouds gathered black, and the rain came down, drifting in great white sheets of water before the wind. I heard the thunder of the sea on the sand-bank at the mouth of the bay. A little further on, I passed the boy crouching for shelter under the lee of the sand-hills. Then I saw the raging sea, and the rollers tumbling in on the sand-bank, and the driven rain sweeping over the waters like a flying garment, and the yellow wilderness of the beach with one solitary black figure standing on it—the figure of Sergeant Cuff.

He waved his hand towards the north, when he first saw me. "Keep on that side!" he shouted. "And come on down here to me!"

I went down to him, choking for breath, with my heart leaping as if it was like to leap out of me. I was past speaking. I had a hundred questions to put to him; and not one of them would pass my lips. His face frightened me. I saw a look in his eyes which was a look of horror. He snatched the boot out of my hand, and set it in a footmark on the sand, bearing south from us as we stood, and pointing straight towards the rocky ledge called the South Spit. The mark was not yet blurred out by the rain—and the girl's boot fitted it to a hair.

The Sergeant pointed to the boot in the footmark, without saying a word.

I caught at his arm, and tried to speak to him, and failed as I had failed when I tried before. He went on, following the footsteps down and down to where the rocks and the sand joined. The South Spit was just awash with the flowing tide; the waters heaved over the hidden face of the Shivering Sand. Now this way and now that, with an obstinate silence that fell on you like lead, with an obstinate patience that was dreadful to see, Sergeant Cuff tried the boot in the footsteps, and always found it pointing the same way—straight *to* the rocks. Hunt as he might, no sign could he find anywhere of the footsteps walking *from* them.

He gave it up at last. He looked again at me; and then he looked out at the waters before us, heaving in deeper and deeper over the hidden face of the Shivering Sand. I looked where he looked—and I saw his thought in his face. A dreadful dumb trembling crawled all over me on a sudden. I fell upon my knees on the sand.

"She has been back at the hiding-place," I heard the Sergeant say to himself. "Some fatal accident has happened to her on those rocks."

The girl's altered looks, and words, and actions—the numbed, deadened way in which she listened to me, and spoke to me—when I had found her sweeping the corridor but a few hours since, rose up in my mind, and warned me, even as the Sergeant spoke, that his guess was wide of the dreadful truth. I tried to tell him of the fear that had frozen me up. I tried to say, "The death she has died, Sergeant, was a death of her own seeking." No! the words wouldn't come. The dumb trembling held me in its grip. I couldn't feel the driving rain. I couldn't see the rising tide. As in the vision of a dream, the poor lost creature came back before me. I saw her again as I had seen her in the past time—on the morning when I went to fetch her into the house. I heard her again, telling me that the Shivering Sand seemed to draw her to it against her will, and wondering whether her grave was waiting for her *there*. The horror of it struck at me, in some unfathomable way, through my own child. My girl was just her age. My girl, tried as Rosanna was tried, might have lived that miserable life, and died this dreadful death.

The Sergeant kindly lifted me up, and turned me away from the sight of the place where she had perished.

With that relief, I began to fetch my breath again, and to see things about me, as things really were. Looking towards the sand-hills, I saw the men-servants from out-of-doors, and the fisherman named Yolland, all running down to us together, and all, having taken the alarm, calling

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out to know if the girl had been found. In the fewest words, the Sergeant showed them the evidence of the footmarks, and told them that a fatal accident must have happened to her. He then picked out the fisherman from the rest, and put a question to him, turning about again towards the sea. "Tell me this," he said. "Could a boat have taken her off, from that ledge of rock, where her footmarks stop?"

The fisherman pointed to the rollers tumbling in on the sand-bank, and to the great waves leaping up in clouds of foam against the headlands on either side of us.

"No boat that ever was built," he answered, "could have got to her through *that*."

Sergeant Cuff looked for the last time at the footmarks on the sand, which the rain was now fast blurring out.

"There," he said, "is the evidence that she can't have left this place by land. And here," he went on, looking at the fisherman, "is the evidence that she can't have got away by sea." He stopped, and considered for a minute. "She was seen running towards this place, half an hour before I got here from the house," he said to Yolland. "Some time has passed since then. Call it, altogether, an hour ago. How high would the water be, at that time, on this side of the rocks?" He pointed to the south side—otherwise, the side which was not filled up by the quicksand.

"As the tide makes to-day," said the fisherman, "there wouldn't have been water enough to drown a kitten on that side of the Spit, an hour since."

Sergeant Cuff turned about northward, towards the quicksand.

"How much on this side?" he asked.

"Less still," answered Yolland. "The Shivering Sand would have been just awash, and no more."

The Sergeant turned to me, and said that the accident must have happened on the side of the quicksand. My tongue was loosened at that. "No accident!" I told him. "When she came to this place, she came, weary of her life, to end it here."

He started back from me. "How do you know?" he asked. The rest of them crowded round. The Sergeant recovered himself instantly. He put them back from me; he said I was an old man; he said the discovery had shaken me; he said, "Let him alone a little." Then he turned to Yolland, and asked, "Is there any chance of finding her, when the tide ebbs again?" And Yolland answered, "None. What the Sand gets, the Sand keeps for ever." Having said that, the fisherman came a step nearer, and addressed himself to me.

"Mr. Betteredge," he said, "I have a word to say to you about the young woman's death. Four foot out, broadwise, along the side of the Spit, there's a shelf of rock, about half fathom down under the sand. My question is —why didn't she strike that? If she slipped, by accident, from off the Spit, she fell in, where there's foothold at the bottom, at a depth that would barely cover her to the waist. She must have waded out, or jumped out, into the Deeps beyond—or she wouldn't be missing now. No accident, sir! The Deeps of the Quicksand have got her. And they have got her by her own act."

After that testimony from a man whose knowledge was to be relied on, the Sergeant was silent. The rest of us, like him, held our peace. With one accord, we all turned back up the slope of the beach.

At the sand-hillocks we were met by the under-groom, running to us from the house. The lad is a good lad, and has an honest respect for me. He handed me a little note, with a decent sorrow in his face. "Penelope sent me with this, Mr. Betteredge," he said. "She found it in Rosanna's room."

It was her last farewell word to the old man who had done his best—thank God, always done his best—to befriend her.

"You have often forgiven me, Mr. Betteredge, in past times. When you next see the Shivering Sand, try to forgive me once more. I have found my grave where my grave was waiting for me. I have lived, and died, sir, grateful for your kindness."

There was no more than that. Little as it was, I hadn't manhood enough to hold up against it. Your tears come easy, when you're young, and beginning the world. Your tears come easy, when you're old, and leaving it. I burst out crying.

Sergeant Cuff took a step nearer to me—meaning kindly, I don't doubt. I shrank back from him. "Don't touch me," I said. "It's the dread of you, that has driven her to it."

"You are wrong, Mr. Betteredge," he answered, quietly. "But there will be time enough to speak of it when we are indoors again."

I followed the rest of them, with the help of the groom's arm. Through the driving rain we went back—to meet the trouble and the terror that were waiting for us at the house.

CHAPTER XX.

THOSE in front had spread the news before us. We found the servants in a state of panic. As we passed my lady's door, it was thrown open violently from the inner side. My mistress came out among us (with Mr. Franklin following, and trying vainly to compose her), quite beside herself with the horror of the thing.

"You are answerable for this!" she cried out, threatening the Sergeant wildly with her hand. "Gabriel! give that wretch his money—and release me from the sight of him!"

The Sergeant was the only one among us who was fit to cope with her — being the only one among us who was in possession of himself.

"I am no more answerable for this distressing calamity, my lady, than you are," he said.

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"If, in half an hour from this, you still insist on my leaving the house, I will accept your ladyship's dismissal, but not your ladyship's money."

It was spoken very respectfully, but very firmly at the same time—and it had its effect on my mistress as well as on me. She suffered Mr. Franklin to lead her back into the room. As the door closed on the two, the Sergeant, looking about among the women-servants in his observant way, noticed that, while all the rest were merely frightened, Penelope was in tears. "When your father has changed his wet clothes," he said to her, "come and speak to us, in your father's room."

Before the half-hour was out, I had got my dry clothes on, and had lent Sergeant Cuff such change of dress as he required. Penelope came in to us to hear what the Sergeant wanted with her. I don't think I ever felt what a good dutiful daughter I had, so strongly as I felt it at that moment. I took her and sat her on my knee—and I prayed God bless her. She hid her head on my bosom, and put her arms round my neck—and we waited a little while in silence. The poor dead girl must have been at the bottom of it, I think, with my daughter and with me. The Sergeant went to the window, and stood there looking out. I thought it right to thank him for considering us both in this way—and I did.

People in high life have all the luxuries to themselves—among others, the luxury of indulging their feelings. People in low life have no such privilege. Necessity, which spares our betters, has no pity on *us*. We learn to put our feelings back into ourselves, and to jog on with our duties as patiently as may be. I don't complain of this—I only notice it. Penelope and I were ready for the Sergeant, as soon as the Sergeant was ready on his side. Asked if she knew what had led her fellow-servant to destroy herself, my daughter answered (as you will foresee) that it was for love of Mr. Franklin Blake. Asked next, if she had mentioned this notion of hers to any other person, Penelope answered, "I have not mentioned it, for Rosanna's sake." I felt it necessary to add a word to this. I said, "And for Mr. Franklin's sake, my dear, as well. If Rosanna *has* died for love of him, it is not with his knowledge or by his fault. Let him leave the house to-day, if he does leave it, without the useless pain of knowing the truth." Sergeant Cuff said, "Quite right," and fell silent again; comparing Penelope's notion (as it seemed to me) with some other notion of his own which he kept to himself.

At the end of the half-hour, my mistress's bell rang.

On my way to answer it, I met Mr. Franklin coming out of his aunt's sitting-room. He mentioned that her ladyship was ready to see Sergeant Cuff—in my presence as before—and he added that he himself wanted to say two words to the Sergeant first. On our way back to my room, he stopped, and looked at the railway time-table in the hall.

"Are you really going to leave us, sir?" I asked. "Miss Rachel will surely come right again, if you only give her time."

"She will come right again," answered Mr. Franklin, "when she hears that I have gone away, and that she will see me no more."

I thought he spoke in resentment of my young lady's treatment of him. But it was not so. My mistress had noticed, from the time when the police first came into the house, that the bare mention of him was enough to set Miss Rachel's temper in a flame. He had been too fond of his cousin to like to confess this to himself, until the truth had been forced on him, when she drove off to her aunt's. His eyes once opened in that cruel way which you know of, Mr. Franklin had taken his resolution—the one resolution which a man of any spirit *could* take—to leave the house.

What he had to say to the Sergeant was spoken in my presence. He described her ladyship as willing to acknowledge that she had spoken over hastily. And he asked if Sergeant Cuff would consent—in that case—to accept his fee, and to leave the matter of the Diamond where the matter stood now. The Sergeant answered, "No, sir. My fee is paid me for doing my duty. I decline to take it, until my duty is done."

"I don't understand you," says Mr. Franklin.

"I'll explain myself, sir," says the Sergeant. "When I came here, I undertook to throw the necessary light on the matter of the missing Diamond. I am now ready, and waiting, to redeem my pledge. When I have stated the case to Lady Verinder as the case now stands, and when I have told her plainly what course of action to take for the recovery of the Moonstone, the responsibility will be off my shoulders. Let her ladyship decide, after that, whether she does, or does not, allow me to go on. I shall then have done what I undertook to do—and I'll take my fee."

In those words, Sergeant Cuff reminded us that, even in the Detective Police, a man may have a reputation to lose.

The view he took was so plainly the right one, that there was no more to be said. As I rose to conduct him to my lady's room, he asked if Mr. Franklin wished to be present. Mr. Franklin answered, "Not unless Lady Verinder desires it." He added, in a whisper to me, as I was following the Sergeant out, "I know what that man is going to say about Rachel; and I am too fond of her to hear it, and keep my temper. Leave me by myself."

I left him, miserable enough, leaning on the sill of my window, with his face hidden in his hands—and Penelope peeping through the door, longing to comfort him. In Mr. Franklin's place, I should have called her in. When you are ill used by one woman, there is great comfort in telling it to another—because, nine times out of ten, the other always takes your side. Perhaps, when my back was turned, he did call her in? In that case, it is only doing my daughter justice to declare that she would stick at no-

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thing, in the way of comforting Mr. Franklin Blake.

In the mean time, Sergeant Cuff and I proceeded to my lady's room.

At the last conference we had held with her, we had found her not over willing to lift her eyes from the book which she had on the table. On this occasion there was a change for the better. She met the Sergeant's eye with an eye that was as steady as his own. The family spirit showed itself in every line of her face; and I knew that Sergeant Cuff would meet his match, when a woman like my mistress was strung up to hear the worst he could say to her.

SOME VERY LIGHT LITERATURE.

It is a curious experience to glance through the pages of some magazine or other periodical of comparatively recent date, and to observe the enormous difference which the lapse of even a few years makes, not only in our manners and habits, our costumes, the hours which we keep, our mode of travelling, and the like, but also in the style of literature of the lighter kind, which the taste of the age demands, and which those who live by catering to that taste, as a matter of course, employ. Accident has lately thrown in the way of the writer an old volume of that once-popular and well-known magazine, La Belle Assemblée; and the reflection with which this article opens was inspired by a careful and wondering examination of its contents.

It is astonishing how soon a newspaper or periodical of any sort gets to be old and obsolete, and how queerly some of the facts and opinions contained in such works show when looked at with the knowledge of the subsequent issue of events present to our mind. It was but the other day, after an interview with Constance Kent at the Penitentiary, Milbank—where I found her engaged in the harmless occupation of ironing linen—that, on referring back to a number of the Annual Register for the year in which the Road murder was committed, I found it stated as an instance of what absurd theories people will sometimes put forward, that certain persons had even gone so far as to suggest that the murdered child had been the victim of Miss Constance Kent, a daughter of the house! Knowing what we do now, this paragraph reads oddly enough.

And so with this other periodical, La Belle Assemblée. In its pages also we light upon many things which, remembering subsequent events, read oddly enough. Knowing, for example, what we do now of the author of the Waverley Novels, does it not seem strange to find him alluded to in these pages as "Mr. Scott, the northern poet"? Or, again, acquainted as we are now with the properties and capabilities of iron, is it not marvellous to read an article on the construction of fireproof theatres, without one mention of this now much-prized metal from beginning to end of the treatise? The use of stone everywhere is the panacea against danger by fire set up by the writer of this article, who actually advocates the adoption of a vaulted stone roof for every theatre that is built, even though it should necessitate the introduction of flying-buttresses in the external construction of the building. It furnishes, by-the-by, a curious subject for reflection to find that people were yearning for fireproof theatres when they knew of no more suitable material of which to construct them than blocks of granite; and that even now, in 1868, when we know of a material which is more convenient to use, and which would render the attainment of this most desirable object comparatively certain, we are still no better off as to security from fire in our theatres than we were in 1809.

For this specimen of periodical literature—this volume of La Belle Assemblée—every word and every illustration in which suggests a state of things utterly obsolete and done away with—was, after all, published no longer ago than in the year of grace just mentioned, and must be regarded, in truth, as part of the light literature of the great nineteenth century. Its contents consist of long extracts from books of tales, of letters from fancifully named correspondents, of occasional theatrical criticisms, of biographical sketches, and of selections from the works of the British poets—Dryden, Pope, Gray, Thomson, and the rest, with occasionally some original verses, by unknown hands, and of inscrutable badness. Lastly, there is—and this perhaps is the most marked feature of the elegant and feeble work before us—an elaborate article on ladies' costumes, which, with two coloured illustrations, is appended to each monthly number.

Upon the whole I am afraid that it must be admitted that the literature of the Belle Assemblée is not of an exalted tone, and would certainly not suit the captious tastes of this cavilling and fastidious age. The stories which are contained in it are hardly inviting. The scene of them is commonly laid in the East, or in other foreign parts, and the tales are of the most high-flown description. The vocative case is largely employed, and the notes of admiration have not an easy time of it. The reflections are not always of startling originality. "Ah," says the heroine of one of these tales, "the heart of mankind is insatiable: it always requires novelty, new ideas, and impressions, which renovate and strengthen its feelings," or again, after congratulating herself on her own high regard for virtue: "Alas! this alone comforts me, this alone supports me! Nor ever, holy virtue, will I become unfaithful to you; ever shall you remain my friend. Oh! I shall see you, and embrace your counterpart, in the likeness of my never-to-be-forgotten Boris!" Boris being the remarkable name of this lady's husband.

There never were such powerful morals as those conveyed by the stories in the B. A.

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There is never any possibility of a mistake about them, they are so strong and so obvious. Sometimes, as in case of Conradine, or Innocence Triumphant, or of Leontine and Belinda—a Moral Tale, the good intention is indicated on the very title-page. Always it is proclaimed before you are many pages deep in the story.

In the two consecutive numbers of the Belle Assemblée for the months of March and April, 1809, a fair example of the story "of the period" is set before us. It is an Eastern tale, called Hulkem! a simple and striking title enough. The narrative opens with a description of the extraordinary hospitality and generosity of Hulkem. He is a philanthropist, whose sole object in life is the promotion of the welfare and happiness of his fellow-creatures, and who, with this end in view, sets up an establishment where anybody who chooses to apply for shelter is received with all sorts of honourable ceremonials, conducted to perfumed baths, waited upon by female slaves of the rarest beauty, fed upon the most sumptuous dishes, clothed in the richest garments, and finally supplied with money on his departure, whenever he is foolish enough to go. The fame of Hulkem's good deeds spread far and wide, and at last extended to the ears of Hassam, a young man possessed of enormous wealth, who instantly determines to emulate his popular neighbour, and set up a rival establishment for the reception of strangers which shall outdo Hulkem's in splendour and luxury. His determination is promptly carried out, and it is the universal opinion that Hassam's Temple of Hospitality furnishes better quarters than even that of Hulkem himself; that his apartments are more comfortable, his entertainments more luxurious, his baths more richly perfumed, his female slaves more astoundingly beautiful, and his pecuniary gifts more munificent than those of the original philanthropist. Hassam finds, nevertheless, that Hulkem is more popular than he is, and that the visitors who patronise him set a higher value on the comparatively plain hospitality of Hulkem than on his own more splendid style of entertainment, and esteem a single gold piece of Hulkem's giving more than a score of them coming from his own generous hand. Much puzzled and annoyed, Hassam busies himself in efforts to account for this strange phenomenon, and, after long and careful research, finds that it is the *way* in which Hulkem confers his benefits which invests them with so great a charm, and that the gifts and favours of his rival are doubled in value in consequence of the sympathetic manner which characterises every one of Hulkem's benevolent acts. Unfortunately, this particular grace is just what Hassam is unable to assume, though he makes many attempts to master it; and so indignant does he at last become in consequence of his failure to make any advance towards propitiating that ungrateful company of paupers to whose service he has devoted his fortune and his labours, that his admiration for Hulkem degenerates gradually into such a measure of hatred that he resolves to put a period to his rival's existence, and see whether he cannot manage at last to become a popular idol when his rival is no longer in the field. He sets off, with a dagger hidden under his cloak, full of murderous intentions towards the unhappy philanthropist.

Hassam, after going to Hulkem's "mansion," and not finding him at home, now begins wandering about the country in a purposeless way, throwing himself down on the ground and getting up again, plucking flowers and scattering their leaves to the wind, and generally losing a great deal of time as assassins frequently do in story-books and melodramas. He wanders into a wood where he beholds a damsel of exquisite beauty, seated on the turf before a cottage-door. Hassam addresses her, and is well received by the young lady. The interview is beautifully detailed in the narrative:

"'You are a stranger,' said she to Hassam, with a voice as sweet as the notes of the lute, and blushing with the most enchanting modesty; 'will you step into the cottage? You come——'

"'From Hulkem's mansion.'

"'You are welcome,' resumed the maiden, smiling, 'to whatever our humble cottage can afford.'

"'Your cottage contains more than all the wealth in Hulkem's possession could procure.'

"'You are very kind. But will you not step in?'

"'Why may we not continue on this spot, the abode of everything that can be called amiable?'"

The beautiful damsel brings out the inevitable dates and milk, and, taking up a lute, plays to the enraptured Hassam "in a style which affected the inmost fibres of his heart." Of course, the pair fell in love with each other, and the father, who has been absent, returning in the course of the afternoon, is entirely favourable to their union—*only* he remembers an obstacle which he fears is insuperable, and which is nothing less than a prior claim upon his daughter's hand and heart, which is possessed by no less a person than the great Hulkem himself, Hassam's rival, as it seems, in all things. Hassam declares that now the doom of Hulkem is sealed. And the father of Zulima (which is the heroine's name), falling into his views with singular alacrity, points out a place in the wood hard by, to which Hulkem is in the habit of resorting every morning to say his prayers. Next morning Hassam repairs to the spot, dagger in hand, finds his victim bent to the earth in an attitude of devotion, makes several offers at him with his blade, but, relenting, at last throws away the dagger. Upon this Zulima rushes forward to embrace her lover, and Hulkem, the rival, raising himself from his praying-carpet, discloses to view the intelligent features of Zulima's father, who has adopted the little ruse in order to test the virtue of his future son-in-law, and who was no other,

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all the time, than the benevolent Hulkem himself. Of course Hassam acknowledges himself to be outdone in generosity and in every other quality by Hulkem. Of course the lovers are united, and of course they are happy ever afterwards.

In addition to stories, there is, in the Belle Assemblée, a good store of letters professing to come from all sorts of queer people, which partake also of the nature of narratives, and some of which appear month after month almost like the parts of a serial story. Of this sort are the letters of Hymenæa in Search of a Husband; the idea founded, of course, on Cœlebs in Search of a Wife. Their design seems to be to show forth how many blockheads, oafs, rogues, and vagabonds will set themselves to work within a given time to win the affections of a young lady gifted with some personal attractions and possessed of forty thousand pounds. One after another the rogues and blockheads are exhibited for the reader's benefit, and made to go through their paces, which, to say truth, are lame and clumsy in the last degree. Throughout these letters there is an obvious determination to be clever which is extremely trying. The delineations of character, the strictures on fashionable life and morals, and the descriptions of what goes on in society, are all intended to strike one as the work of a first-class observer, but fail, for some reason, to do so.

The correspondents of the B. A. are numerous, and some of them absurd. Here is a specimen of a correspondent whose domestic happiness has been destroyed in consequence of one of her sisters having once heard Catalini, the celebrated singer, at a Bath concert! Philomela is a "girl of very animated spirits," she informs the editor, blest with a very good voice, which has been much admired in the narrow circle of her village, and the exercise of which used to afford intense delight both to herself and to her mother and sisters, as they sat at their work. But this blissful state of things was not to be allowed to go on. "About two months since," writes the fair vocalist, "an aunt whom I have at Bath invited my sister Kitty to come and pass a month with her. Kitty went, and has returned; and here, sir, is the cause of all my uneasiness. . . . . How miserably changed is she since she left us. She talks about nothing but Catalini; and if I begin a song, tells me, and tells others, that if I were to hear Catalini I should never attempt to sing again. She passed the room, the other day, whilst I was singing her former favourite song, ''Twas within a mile of Edinburgh Town,' and I heard her say to my brother, who was with her, 'Will that Phill never have done squalling?' If, in the midst of my work, I insensibly slip into a tune, she stops her ears without ceremony, and crossly asks me if I mean to murder her. She has got, moreover, several outlandish words which she occasionally throws in my face to jeer me; the other night I happened to cough so as to drown my tune, when she clapped her hands, and cried 'Bravo! Encora!' "

Rather "outlandish," under the circumstances, it must be owned. Philomela goes on after this to tell of all the disgrace engendered in the family by her sister's affected admiration of Catalini, and entreats the editor of the Belle Assemblée to write something in his magazine, which her sister will see, and which may bring her to a sense of the impropriety of her present proceedings; something like what she herself writes, she thinks, would do, "but in better language, and more like a sermon." The miserable Philomela concludes thus: "Kitty is not the same girl that she was; she talks sometimes very strangely, and frequently, instead of reminding me of my prayers, as she used to do, falls asleep and forgets them herself. The other night, when we had been out dancing, we both fell asleep without saying them; I awoke about two in the morning, and, remembering the omission, waked my sister after much difficulty; she was in a dreadful passion, and absolutely beat me. Now, sir, this was all Bath."

A magazine which addresses itself to the fashionable world should have something to say about its leaders. In each number of the B. A. there is a biographical sketch of some member of the British aristocracy, accompanied by a portrait. These portraits are chiefly after pictures by Hoppner, and exhibit the female aristocracy of the time clad in loose robes, and with unconfined locks blown about, as it seems in most cases, by a high wind. The biographical notices are very brief. In one of his "Sketches," not having much else to say, the author goes into ecstacies about the highly moral tone of the existing arrangements at court. "There probably never was a period in which the females of the British court exhibited a more laudable and splendid pattern of those virtues which adorn the sex in every station of life. . . . The court—at least the female part of it—under the controlling and matronly prudence of the queen, is made what it ought to be—the conservator and example of morals and chastity of manners in fashionable life, the source from which refinement flows, and in which, however fashion may bear sovereign sway, she is never suffered to infringe upon the severity of virtue."

It is evident enough, then, that, in a general way, the compiler of these biographies is a good deal put to it to find matter with which to fill up his space. This is, indeed, so obvious, that when this unfortunate chronicler of nothings does get a chance of having something to say about one of his "illustrious ladies," one feels almost a sense of relief. Such a chance comes in his way at last when he gets to work at the life of Lady Charlotte Campbell, and he makes the most of it. After treating of the beauty of this lady, of her high position in the fashionable world, he tells of her real claim to fame and distinction in these words: "Her ladyship will always maintain a conspicuous place in the

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records of fashion; the time in which she flourished will, if we mistake not, be celebrated as a kind of ÆRA in the decoration of the female world. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to inform those female readers who are possessed of experience in the science of costume, and can count the revolutions of fashions with accuracy and precision, that Lady Charlotte Campbell was the first inventor of what is technically called *short waists*."

To get hold of a personage who is at once an inventor—an inventor of a waist, too—and who is besides a member of the female aristocracy is such a chance as does not come in the way of a compiler of biographical sketches every day. The portion of La Belle Assemblée which was dedicated to the subject of female costume and the fashions was not regarded as the least valuable part of the elegant compilation. Let us ascertain what was prescribed for a lady who wished to be dressed "like other people" in the month of May, 1809. She was expected to wear "a fine cambric round gown, with high collar, finished with needle-work and scolloped lace. . . . . A Spanish spencer of black or puce-coloured velvet, edged with gold lace. A waistcoat or wrap-front of marble, or leopard satin, with collar the same as the spencer, edged also with gold lace. The Vigonian helmet, or patriotic bonnet (!), composed of the same materials; the helmet edged with gold lace, and the crown crossed with gold cord terminating on one side with a cone tassel. Hoop earrings of wrought gold; necklace of variegated amber: gloves, York-tan, and half boots of tan-coloured kid, laced with black cord."

Such was the morning costume. That for the evening is too elaborate in description to be quoted entire. There seems to have been a strong leaning towards the antique and Eastern. The "robe" was to be a Spartan robe; the head-dress a Spartan cap, with Persian diadem, composed of various gems, while a "Carthage cymar" was to be suspended gracefully from one shoulder, and, crossing the skirt of the figure behind, was to be "confined towards the front by the natural disposition of the adverse kind"—whatever that may mean. The word, "adverse," seems to be a favourite with the writer. In describing the illustration to this very notice he says, speaking of a mirror which is introduced in the background, that it is placed there in order to display the tasteful effect of this costume on the *adverse front* of the figure — meaning apparently the back. The changes are rung perpetually upon Roman stomachers, Armenian collars, Alcantara hats and mantles, Carthage cymars, Cossack pelisses, Vigonian helmets, and Patriotic bonnets—articles, to judge by the illustrations, one and all, of unexampled hideousness. The reader cannot have any idea of the horrible aspect presented by a figure in a white robe tightly wrapped about the feet, and loosely wrapped about the waist, shrouded in an Alcantara mantle, and wearing an Alcantara hat upon its head. No notion can be given in words of what a Vigonian helmet is like, or a Patriotic bonnet. They are weird things, all of them, and the "fashionables," who are represented as wearing them, have all a phantom-like look which, curiously enough, reminds one of the ghosts and spectres that William Blake used to draw—Blake, who lived about the time, and when youthful imagination may, without his knowing it, have been impressed by the figures clad in Alcantara mantles and Patriotic helmets, which he encountered flitting about in lonely places.

The author of these descriptions sometimes ventures to demur to the taste displayed in some of the smaller details. There is a walking costume, some of the component parts of which are "a Chinese parasol of lilac sarsnet, with deep Eastern awning, with shoes and gloves of pea-green kid;" of which the writer ventures to say—"the parasol strikes us as being more correct when chosen of the same colour as the lining of the coat or the shoes." Generally, however, he is profoundly satisfied with the beauty of the illustration on which he writes. Sometimes this gentleman give his fair readers the benefit of his opinion on dress in a more abstract form, and as distinct from the fashion-plates, which it is generally his practice to illustrate. "Mantles and cloaks," he says, speaking now on his own authority, "of green Vigonia or merino cloth of various shades, from the sombre hue of the Spanish fly to the more lively pea-green, have succeeded to the purple, which, though a colour most pleasing in itself, is now become too general to find a place in a select wardrobe. Scarlet cloaks are no longer to be seen on genteel women, except as wraps for the theatre; the satiated eye turns, overpowered by their universal glare, to rest on more chaste and more refreshing shades." At other times our author warms with his subject, and is betrayed into an outburst of the finest eloquence. "Buds and blossoms," he cries, speaking of the month of May, "now burst forth into gay luxuriance, and the spirit, renovated by the charming scene, lights anew our hopes, awakens our slumbering energies, and gives to our mortal essence a second spring. It is now that the village-maid throws aside her woollen cloak and vestment of humble brown. It is now also that the fair fashionable discards the velvet mantle and coat of Georgian cloth, for those of more seasonable elegance. Now is seen the unconfined pelisse of gay and pliant sarsnet, the rich and graceful scarf, yielding to each gentle breeze, and sporting gay with zephyrs." Something like a fashion-chronicler this!

Fashion would die of the "vapours" without news, and, in the form of a letter from a young lady in London to a friend in the country, the B. A. gives intelligence of all that is going on in the world of fashion, conveying her information in a style which is both easy and familiar. This young lady is staying in London with friends who appear to be very high-flyers indeed. Their house, "which is in Grosvenor-

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square, is one of the most spacious and sumptuous mansions in town. It is just furnished in the highest style of the present mode. The drawing-room comprises a most attractive assemblage of the Greek and Chinese." A remarkable and bewildering combination, this "assemblage," the colours brought together in our young lady's boudoir being, as she informs us, "pea-green and pale rose-colour."

Dress naturally occupies a great share in these letters. There is a beautiful countess who comes to stay in the house, and who indulges continually in the most gorgeous and ever-new toilettes. This lady supplies matter for the elegant letter-writer, who is very minute and perhaps a little spiteful in her manner of describing the different articles which go to make up the countess's costume. These letters contain a strange jumble. At the end of each there is appended a little literary intelligence—some announcement of new books about to appear, or an intimation that the writer has forwarded to her friend, along with the fashion-prints, some work in which she herself has been lately revelling. She speaks of forwarding, in her next packet, Gleanings from Zimmerman's Solitude, and describes the work as a "care-soothing and amiable little production;" while in another place she announces some novel productions by the "ingenious" Miss Porter, asking her friend, "who can but look forward with pleasurable expectation to any forthcoming work from the authors of Thaddeus of Warsaw and the Hungarian Brothers?"

Here, then, roughly sketched—the main points alone insisted on, and only some of those, lest the reader's patience should weary—is a brief abstract of the contents of an average serial magazine of light literature, published during the early part of this present century. Here is a link in the chain which connects the Tatler, the Spectator, and the Rambler with the periodical literature of our own day. The link is a flimsy one, made of pewter or pinchbeck at best. It will not bear any severe kind of testing, or to be dealt with at all roughly; but still it *is* a link, and as such not to be altogether ignored. It is melancholy to think that those fine works mentioned above should have had such a successor. The decline of any art, indeed, is always a melancholy fact to contemplate. When a thing once well done, instead of advancing and getting to be better done, goes back, and is done very much worse than it was before, it must always—in a world of which progress is the first law—be painful and unnatural. Yet these temporary declines—chiefly because they *are* temporary—are not really discouraging. When La Belle Assemblée flourished, everything connected with matters of taste was at its worst. Was anything—one is tempted to ask—done well in 1809? In what a condition was art, costume, public taste, as manifested in the buildings erected at that time, and in all things decorative of whatever kind! The literature of La Belle Assemblée was no exception to the general weakness and bad taste of them all.

Yet art, and literature, and taste have survived. They were not really dead. It is truer to say that they slept, and have awakened again.

WOODLAND MUSIC.

What saith the hum of the woodlands,
The undertone of the air?
Can fancy understand it,
Or human words declare?
Mine can; at least, I dream so,
As I listen and compare.

The trees, from leaves and branches,
All seem to whisper and sigh,
As lovers might to lovers,
Under the moonlit sky,
As passionate and foolish—
Letting the world go by.

The grass to the grass makes music,
As the wind in its current rolls,
The sedges sigh to the willows,
The flower with the flower condoles,
Each in its little circle,
As if they were human souls.

The tiniest life in the sunbeam
In the pebble's caverns dark,
In the ripple of the shallows,
Where a straw may be an ark,—
In the shelter of the mosses,
In the crinkles of the bark,

In every pulse and movement
Of Nature's mighty breath,
Enacts for ever and ever
The tale of Life and Death—
Of Hope, and Struggle, and Effort,
Of Life, and Love, and Death.

There's war among the myriads,
That flutter, and float, and crawl,—
There's cruelty, and bloodshed,
And agony 'mid them all—
The strong consuming the feeble,
The large oppressing the small.

In their little world they suffer,
As man in his larger sphere;
Yet not, in God's great bounty,
Without some blessings clear,
And the kindly compensations
That balance a fate severe.

Their voices, though we hear not,
Keep time to the tune of spring;
The bee in the rose is happy,
And the moth upon the wing;
And the worm has as much enjoyment
As the birds that soar and sing.

Ay, here in this breezy woodland,
Under the bright blue sky,

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To me all Nature whispers,
And the grass and the flowers reply,
The old, the eternal chorus—
"We live, we love, we die."

HOLIDAY ROMANCE.

By Charles Dickens.

IN FOUR PARTS.

Part III.

ROMANCE. FROM THE PEN OF LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ROBIN REDFORTH.*

The subject of our present narrative would appear to have devoted himself to the Pirate profession at a comparatively early age. We find him in command of a splendid schooner of one hundred guns, loaded to the muzzle, 'ere yet he had had a party in honour of his tenth birthday.

It seems that our hero, considering himself spited by a Latin-Grammar-Master, demanded the satisfaction due from one man of honour to another. Not getting it, he privately withdrew his haughty spirit from such low company, bought a second-hand pocket-pistol, folded up some sandwiches in a paper bag, made a bottle of Spanish liquorice-water, and entered on a career of valour.

It were tedious to follow Boldheart (for such was his name) through the commencing stages of his history. Suffice it that we find him bearing the rank of Captain Boldheart, reclining in full uniform on a crimson hearth-rug spread out upon the quarter deck of his schooner the Beauty, in the China Seas. It was a lovely evening, and as his crew lay grouped about him, he favoured them with the following melody:

O landsmen are folly,
O Pirates are jolly,
O Diddleum Dolly
Di!
(*Chorus*) Heave yo.

The soothing effect of these animated sounds floating over the waters, as the common sailors united their rough voices to take up the rich tones of Boldheart, may be more easily conceived than described.

It was under these circumstances that the look-out at the mast-head gave the word, "Whales!"

All was now activity.

"Where away?" cried Captain Boldheart, starting up.

"On the larboard bow, sir," replied the fellow at the mast-head, touching his hat. For such was the height of discipline on board the Beauty, that even at that height he was obliged to mind it or be shot through the head.

"This adventure belongs to me," said Boldheart. "Boy, my harpoon. Let no man follow;" and leaping alone into his boat, the captain rowed with admirable dexterity in the direction of the monster.

All was now excitement.

"He nears him!" said an elderly seaman, following the captain through his spy-glass.

* Aged Nine.

"He strikes him!" said another seaman, a mere stripling, but also with a spy-glass.

"He tows him towards us!" said another seaman, a man in the full vigour of life, but also with a spy-glass.

In fact the captain was seen approaching, with the huge bulk following. We will not dwell on the deafening cries of "Boldheart! Boldheart!" with which he was received, when, carelessly leaping on the quarter-deck, he presented his prize to his men. They afterwards made two thousand four hundred and seventeen pound ten and sixpence by it.

Ordering the sails to be braced up, the captain now stood W.N.W. The Beauty flew rather than floated over the dark blue waters. Nothing particular occurred for a fortnight, except taking, with considerable slaughter, four Spanish galleons and a Snow from South America, all richly laden. Inaction began to tell upon the spirits of the men. Captain Boldheart called all hands aft, and said:

"My lads, I hear there are discontented ones among ye. Let any such stand forth."

After some murmuring, in which the expressions, "Aye, aye, sir," "Union Jack," "Avast," "Starboard," "Port," "Bowsprit," and similar indications of a mutinous undercurrent, though subdued, were audible, Bill Boozey, captain of the foretop, came out from the rest. His form was that of a giant, but he quailed under the captain's eye.

"What are your wrongs?" said the captain.

"Why, d'ye see, Captain Boldheart," returned the towering mariner, "I've sailed man and boy for many a year, but I never yet know'd the milk served out for the ship's company's teas to be so sour as 'tis aboard this craft."

At this moment the thrilling cry, "Man overboard!" announced to the astonished crew that Boozey, in stepping back as the captain (in mere thoughtfulness) laid his hand upon the faithful pocket-pistol which he wore in his belt, had lost his balance, and was struggling with the foaming tide.

All was now stupefaction.

But, with Captain Boldheart, to throw off his uniform coat regardless of the various rich orders with which it was decorated, and to plunge into the sea after the drowning giant, was the work of a moment. Maddening was the excitement when boats were lowered; intense the joy when the captain was seen holding up the drowning man with his teeth; deafening the cheering when both were restored to the main deck of the Beauty. And from the instant of his changing his wet clothes for dry ones, Captain Boldheart had no such devoted though humble friend as William Boozey.

Boldheart now pointed to the horizon, and called the attention of his crew to the taper spars of a ship lying snug in harbour under the guns of a fort.

"She shall be ours at sunrise," said he. "Serve out a double allowance of grog, and prepare for action."

All was now preparation.

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When morning dawned after a sleepless night, it was seen that the stranger was crowding on all sail to come out of the harbour and offer battle. As the two ships came nearer to each other, the stranger fired a gun and hoisted Roman colours. Boldheart then perceived her to be the Latin-Grammar-Master's bark. Such indeed she was, and had been tacking about the world in unavailing pursuit, from the time of his first taking to a roving life.

Boldheart now addressed his men, promising to blow them up, if he should feel convinced that their reputation required it, and giving orders that the Latin-Grammar-Master should be taken alive. He then dismissed them to their quarters, and the fight began with a broadside from the Beauty. She then veered round and poured in another. The Scorpion (so was the bark of the Latin-Grammar-Master appropriately called) was not slow to return her fire, and a terrific cannonading ensued, in which the guns of the Beauty did tremendous execution.

The Latin-Grammar-Master was seen upon the poop, in the midst of the smoke and fire, encouraging his men. To do him justice, he was no Craven, though his white hat, his short grey trousers, and his long snuff-coloured surtout reaching to his heels—the self-same coat in which he had spited Boldheart—contrasted most unfavourably with the brilliant uniform of the latter. At this moment Boldheart, seizing a pike and putting himself at the head of his men, gave the word to board.

A desperate conflict ensued in the hammock nettings—or somewhere in about that direction—until the Latin-Grammar-Master, having all his masts gone, his hull and rigging shot through and through, and seeing Boldheart slashing a path towards him, hauled down his flag himself, gave up his sword to Boldheart, and asked for quarter. Scarce had he been put into the captain's boat, 'ere the Scorpion went down with all on board.

On Captain Boldheart's now assembling his men, a circumstance occurred. He found it necessary with one blow of his cutlass to kill the Cook, who, having lost his brother in the late action, was making at the Latin-Grammar-Master in an infuriated state, intent on his destruction with a carving-knife.

Captain Boldheart then turned to the Latin-Grammar-Master, severely reproaching him with his perfidy, and put it to his crew what they considered that a master who spited a boy deserved?

They answered with one voice, "Death."

"It may be so," said the Captain, "but it shall never be said that Boldheart stained his hour of triumph with the blood of his enemy. Prepare the cutter."

The cutter was immediately prepared.

"Without taking your life," said the Captain, "I must yet for ever deprive you of the power of spiting other boys. I shall turn you adrift in this boat. You will find in her, two oars, a compass, a bottle of rum, a small cask of water, a piece of pork, a bag of biscuit, and my Latin grammar. Go! And spite the Natives, if you can find any."

Deeply conscious of this bitter sarcasm, the unhappy wretch was put into the cutter, and was soon left far behind. He made no effort to row, but was seen lying on his back with his legs up, when last made out by the ship's telescopes.

A stiff breeze now beginning to blow, Captain Boldheart gave orders to keep her S.S.W., easing her a little during the night by falling off a point or two W. by W., or even by W.S., if she complained much. He then retired for the night, having in truth much need of repose. In addition to the fatigues he had undergone, this brave officer had received sixteen wounds in the engagement, but had not mentioned it.

In the morning a white squall came on, and was succeeded by other squalls of various colours. It thundered and lightened heavily for six weeks. Hurricanes then set in for two months. Waterspouts and tornadoes followed. The oldest sailor on board—and he was a very old one—had never seen such weather. The Beauty lost all idea where she was, and the carpenter reported six feet two of water in the hold. Everybody fell senseless at the pumps every day.

Provisions now ran very low. Our hero put the crew on short allowance, and put himself on shorter allowance than any man in the ship. But his spirit kept him fat. In this extremity, the gratitude of Boozey, the captain of the foretop whom our readers may remember, was truly affecting. The loving though lowly William repeatedly requested to be killed, and preserved for the captain's table.

We now approach a change in affairs.

One day during a gleam of sunshine and when the weather had moderated, the man at the masthead—too weak now to touch his hat, besides its having been blown away—called out, "Savages!"

All was now expectation.

Presently fifteen hundred canoes, each paddled by twenty savages, were seen advancing in excellent order. They were of a light green colour (the Savages were), and sang, with great energy, the following strain:

> Choo a choo a choo tooth.
> Muntch, muntch. Nycey!
> Choo a choo a choo tooth.
> Muntch, muntch. Nyce!

As the shades of night were by this time closing in, these expressions were supposed to embody this simple people's views of the Evening Hymn. But it too soon appeared that the song was a translation of "For what we are going to receive, &c."

The chief, imposingly decorated with feathers of lively colours, and having the majestic appearance of a fighting Parrot, no sooner understood (he understood English perfectly) that the ship was the Beauty, Captain Boldheart, than he fell upon his face on the deck, and could not be persuaded to rise until the captain had lifted him up, and told him he wouldn't hurt him. All the rest of the savages also fell on their faces with marks of terror, and had also to be lifted up one by one. Thus the fame of the great Bold-

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heart had gone before him, even among these children of nature.

Turtles and oysters were now produced in astonishing numbers, and on these and yams the people made a hearty meal. After dinner the Chief told Captain Boldheart that there was better feeding up at the village, and that he would be glad to take him and his officers there. Apprehensive of treachery, Boldheart ordered his boat's crew to attend him completely armed. And well were it for other commanders if their precautions—but let us not anticipate.

When the canoes arrived at the beach, the darkness of the night was illumined by the light of an immense fire. Ordering his boat's crew (with the intrepid though illiterate William at their head) to keep close and be upon their guard, Boldheart bravely went on, arm-in-arm with the Chief.

But how to depict the captain's surprise when he found a ring of Savages singing in chorus that barbarous translation of "For what we are going to receive, &c.," which has been given above, and dancing hand-in-hand round the Latin-Grammar-Master, in a hamper with his head shaved, while two savages floured him, before putting him to the fire to be cooked!

Boldheart now took counsel with his officers on the course to be adopted. In the mean time the miserable captive never ceased begging pardon and imploring to be delivered. On the generous Boldheart's proposal, it was at length resolved that he should not be cooked, but should be allowed to remain raw, on two conditions. Namely,

1. That he should never under any circumstances presume to teach any boy anything any more.

2. That, if taken back to England, he should pass his life in travelling to find out boys who wanted their exercises done, and should do their exercises for those boys for nothing, and never say a word about it.

Drawing his sword from its sheath, Boldheart swore him to these conditions on its shining blade. The prisoner wept bitterly, and appeared acutely to feel the errors of his past career.

The captain then ordered his boat's crew to make ready for a volley, and after firing to re-load quickly. "And expect a score or two on ye to go head over heels," murmured William Boozey, "for I'm a looking at ye." With those words the derisive though deadly William took a good aim.

"Fire!"

The ringing voice of Boldheart was lost in the report of the guns and the screeching of the savages. Volley after volley awakened the numerous echoes. Hundreds of savages were killed, hundreds wounded, and thousands ran howling into the woods. The Latin-Grammar-Master had a spare nightcap lent him, and a long-tail coat which he wore hind side before. He presented a ludicrous though pitiable appearance, and serve him right.

We now find Captain Boldheart, with this rescued wretch on board, standing off for other islands. At one of these, not a cannibal island, but a pork and vegetable one, he married (only in fun on his part) the King's daughter. Here he rested some time, receiving from the natives great quantities of precious stones, gold-dust, elephants' teeth, and sandal-wood, and getting very rich. This, too, though he almost every day made presents of enormous value to his men.

The ship being at length as full as she could hold of all sorts of valuable things, Boldheart gave orders to weigh the anchor, and turn the Beauty's head towards England. These orders were obeyed with three cheers, and ere the sun went down full many a hornpipe had been danced on deck by the uncouth though agile William.

We next find Captain Boldheart about three leagues off Madeira, surveying through his spy-glass a stranger of suspicious appearance making sail towards him. On his firing a gun ahead of her to bring her to, she ran up a flag, which he instantly recognised as the flag from the mast in the back garden at home.

Inferring from this, that his father had put to sea to seek his long-lost son, the captain sent his own boat on board the stranger, to inquire if this was so, and if so, whether his father's intentions were strictly honourable. The boat came back with a present of greens and fresh meat, and reported that the stranger was The Family, of twelve hundred tons, and had not only the captain's father on board, but also his mother, with the majority of his aunts and uncles, and all his cousins. It was further reported to Boldheart that the whole of these relations had expressed themselves in a becoming manner, and were anxious to embrace him and thank him for the glorious credit he had done them. Boldheart at once invited them to breakfast next morning on board the Beauty, and gave orders for a brilliant ball that should last all day.

It was in the course of the night that the captain discovered the hopelessness of reclaiming the Latin-Grammar-Master. That thankless traitor was found out, as the two ships lay near each other, communicating with The Family by signals, and offering to give up Boldheart. He was hanged at the yard-arm the first thing in the morning, after having it impressively pointed out to him by Boldheart that this was what spiters came to.

The meeting between the captain and his parents was attended with tears. His uncles and aunts would have attended their meeting with tears too, but he wasn't going to stand that. His cousins were very much astonished by the size of his ship and the discipline of his men, and were greatly overcome by the splendour of his uniform. He kindly conducted them round the vessel, and pointed out everything worthy of notice. He also fired his hundred guns, and found it amusing to witness their alarm.

The entertainment surpassed everything ever seen on board ship, and lasted from ten in the morning until seven the next morning. Only one disagreeable incident occurred. Captain

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Boldheart found himself obliged to put his Cousin Tom in irons, for being disrespectful. On the boy's promising amendment, however, he was humanely released, after a few hours' close confinement.

Boldheart now took his mother down into the great cabin, and asked after the young lady with whom, it was well known to the world, he was in love. His mother replied that the object of his affections was then at school at Margate, for the benefit of sea-bathing (it was the month of September), but that she feared the young lady's friends were still opposed to the union. Boldheart at once resolved, if necessary, to bombard the town.

Taking the command of his ship with this intention, and putting all but fighting men on board The Family, with orders to that vessel to keep in company, Boldheart soon anchored in Margate Roads. Here he went ashore well armed, and attended by his boat's crew (at their head the faithful though ferocious William), and demanded to see the Mayor, who came out of his office.

"Dost know the name of yon ship, Mayor?" asked Boldheart, fiercely.

"No," said the Mayor, rubbing his eyes, which he could scarce believe when he saw the goodly vessel riding at anchor.

"She is named the Beauty," said the captain.

"Hah!" exclaimed the Mayor, with a start. "And you, then, are Captain Boldheart?"

"The same."

A pause ensued. The Mayor trembled.

"Now, Mayor," said the captain, "choose. Help me to my Bride, or be bombarded."

The Mayor begged for two hours' grace, in which to make inquiries respecting the young lady. Boldheart accorded him but one, and during that one placed William Boozey sentry over him, with a drawn sword and instructions to accompany him wherever he went, and to run him through the body if he showed a sign of playing false.

At the end of the hour, the Mayor re-appeared more dead than alive, closely waited on by Boozey more alive than dead.

"Captain," said the Mayor, "I have ascertained that the young lady is going to bathe. Even now she waits her turn for a machine. The tide is low, though rising. I, in one of our town-boats, shall not be suspected. When she comes forth in her bathing-dress into the shallow water from behind the hood of the machine, my boat shall intercept her and prevent her return. Do you the rest."

"Mayor," returned Captain Boldheart, "thou hast saved thy town."

The captain then signalled his boat to take him off, and steering her himself ordered her crew to row towards the bathing-ground, and there to rest upon their oars. All happened as had been arranged. His lovely bride came forth, the Mayor glided in behind her, she became confused and had floated out of her depth, when, with one skilful touch of the rudder and one quivering stroke from the boat's crew, her adoring Boldheart held her in his strong arms. There, her shrieks of terror were changed to cries of joy.

Before the Beauty could get under weigh, the hoisting of all the flags in the town and harbour, and the ringing of all the bells, announced to the brave Boldheart that he had nothing to fear. He therefore determined to be married on the spot, and signalled for a clergyman and clerk, who came off promptly in a sailing-boat named the Skylark. Another great entertainment was then given on board the Beauty, in the midst of which the Mayor was called out by a messenger. He returned with the news that Government had sent down to know whether Captain Boldheart, in acknowledgment of the great services he had done his country by being a Pirate, would consent to be made a Lieutenant-Colonel. For himself he would have spurned the worthless boon, but his Bride wished it and he consented.

Only one thing further happened before the good ship Family was dismissed, with rich presents to all on board. It is painful to record (but such is human nature in some cousins) that Captain Boldheart's unmannerly cousin Tom was actually tied up to receive three dozen with a rope's end "for cheekyness and making games," when Captain Boldheart's Lady begged for him and he was spared. The Beauty then refitted, and the Captain and his Bride departed for the Indian Ocean to enjoy themselves for evermore.

COAL.

"Pay 'em well to keep him, that it would! T' owners would never make a better bargain than by just takking him from t' shop he keeps and settling him down among our men. He's just emptied t' public-houses and got every one of our hands to work on t' Monday morning fust thing. Niver such a thing known since I've had ought to do with t' Cornope colliery, and that's, man and boy, more years than you can recollect, master. I don't reckon him much of a preacher myself; but he just hits the men's mark, that's where it is. He keeps a little shop out Doortose way, but he's one of the Connexion, and has just come down here on his circuit and done wonders. Our men have listened and took to him till the worst and roughest among 'em won't either drink or swear, and as for working——How many are there down this morning?" (turning to an under-viewer). "There, gentlemen, you hear that? The whole number that's due within three! Why, one of our greatest difficulties is to get the men to work regularly. On a Monday we won't varry often hev more than a quarter of the number down the pit we want—drinking, or larking, or playing the fool one way or the other, that's what they're after; on a Tuesday, when t' money's spent, more will turn in; but it's often Wednesday and the week harrf gone afore we're in full work. Now it stands to reason, don't it, that with all the machinery and other expenses

going on, this is a heavy loss, and makes coal cost twice as much to get to the surface? and, as this preacher has the knack of getting 'em to work, what I say is, let the owners buy up his Doortose shop, and jest plant him down here to look after the men."

"Wouldn't answer, Muster Black! wouldn't answer, sir!" interposed an underviewer, respectfully; "the instant they found out he'd ought to do with t' owners they wouldn't listen to him. They know he don't get a penny by coming among 'em, 'all for love of their poor souls,' as he says; and once they knew he was planted here to coax 'em to work, he might whistle and pray until he were blue."

We are in a northern county of England; and are holding this conversation in the dark, and thousands of feet underground. I am called over the coals* for the second time, and am exploring one of the largest and deepest pits in the kingdom. Above us is a village with a population of two thousand souls, every one of whom is directly dependent upon the pit. Twelve years ago, not one of those symmetrically ranged dwellings was to be seen, and the schools and chapels, shops and taverns, which have rapidly followed in their wake, are of still more recent date. Take a section of Aldershott or Shorncliff, and spread their huts over a larger space; or magnify the toy-houses of your children until their monotonously even sides and sloping roofs are large enough to hold men and women; plant your dwellings in long rows so as to make a succession of streets leading to and coming from nowhere in particular; let your pathways be unpaved and muddy, your public-houses numerous, and your shops of a decidedly "general" kind; throw in several chapels, and some well-built schools, and you have the pit-village of Cornope.

It is early morning, and we have driven miles to be with the chief viewer before he sets out on his inspection for the day. At his house we have doffed our clothes and hats, for blue flannel garments and black leather skull-caps. Divining-rods, or wands of a prescribed length, and without handle or curve, are put into our hands, and in a few minutes we are crouching in the "cage," and descending swiftly down a bricked shaft into the earth. The descent is not unpleasant. There is none of that foul hot stench, that oppressive sensation of being choked with sulphur, that parched scorching of lungs, and eyes, and tongue, which distinguished my first visit. Nor does the mingled wet and coal-dust come down in great black blobs upon our face and hands. It is rather warm and close, but nothing more. The crouching attitude, the darkness, the creaks and grunts of the machinery, the very knowledge that we were bottoming one of the deepest pits in England, make the jaunt remarkable; but its pleasures exceed its pain. A passing jangle of chains and the other cage passes us on its upward way, and a short time afterwards I am handed out by two grimy giants in waiting.

A tremendous draught, which whistles by our ears and gives our beards the sensation of being brushed by machinery, is the first feeling. Many pairs of mighty bellows are focused at our legs and bodies, and we mechanically turn up our pea-jacket collars, stamp upon the ground, and fold our arms sturdily, like the wind-beset traveller in the fable. "Nice ventilation, you see!" sounds like a mockery, but it is given in good faith, and we plod our way along underground tramways for miles. There is very little stooping; for the excavations are a goodly height, and we pass from workings to stables, and to the brick-work where new shafts are being sunk, noticing little more than that the gradations from heat to cold are sudden, and that we are treading on a jointed tramway which has a tendency to trip one up every twenty yards or so. Changes from gusty windiness to tropical heat are sudden. Lifting a coarse canvas curtain, and passing under it, takes us at once from Siberia to the torrid zone. In the first we are among vast currents of air coming fresh and cold into the pit; in the second we stand amid hot and exhausted air which is being forced outwards by the furnace. Canvas or "brattice-work" divides the two, and the vast labyrinthian passages along which coal has been or is being worked are cold or hot according to the turn the ventilation has been made to take. It is in a particularly hot passage, and after I have knocked my head against a cross-beam, in obedience to the cry, "No need to stoop, sir, plenty of room here—six-foot heading this," that I am favoured with an explanation of the talk about the preacher. "He has made 'em serious for a time, like the revival people did; and while it lasts, which won't be long, they'll work better—that's all. Our men are a roughish lot; good fellows in the main, you know, but fond of their own way, and liking their own pleasures. Cock-fighting (in a whisper, as if even underground walls might have ears) is a favourite sport of theirs; many of 'em have dogs they'll match for a ten-pound note for fighting, you know; and here and there is a boxer who'll back himself, and get his friends to back him for money. Times aren't good just now, and the coal trade's flat; but when work's plentiful, and wages high, you can't prevent them indulging as they like. T' owners set their faces again' it, t' parson preaches again' it, t' children are taught t's wrong. But it takes a long time to alter t' habits which have grown and got strong all along t' country-side. We're doing it, however, we're doing of it. Billiards was a foine thing for t' pitmen, foine thing. No, sir, I dawn't mean skittles, and I dawn't mean lorn-billiards, as ye call 'em. I'm just meaning a green table, and the long sticks they ca' 'kews,' and balls, and pockets, and cushions, and such like. A regular billiard-table such as t' gentlefolks play on, that's what I mean. They've got 'em in cottages knocked into one happen, or a hoose older and bigger than the rest, and a small subscription of a few pennies a week, and the men jest play when they like. They're let smoke, and they can have coffee and

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* See page 112 of the present volume.

tea—in some places beer, but it is not common. It's a grand thing, cause they know it's t' game the biggest gentlemen play at, and that there's no call to be ashamed o' playing it. For it's a great mistak' to suppose you can treat our men like children, or amuse 'em wi' wot wouldn't amuse yoursen. That's the fault I've found wi' o' many t' people. They borrers t' big school-room of t' owners, and perhaps gives 'em a lectur' which is made up out o' childer's books. Shows 'em a magic lanthorn, and tries to mak 'em laugh at wot they know is rubbish. Pitmen aren't fools, sir; and they have their bit of 'cocking,' and their dog-match, at holiday time, because they like it, and you'll never get a stop put to it till you get 'em to like something else better. So any game; I don't keer whether it's cricket for out-o'-doors, or playing at markers, or at billiards, or quoits, I'm glad to see 'em come in, and so is t' owners when they're wise. For you can't mend t' men's condition without making it better for t' trade. T' owners foind our pitmen in a good deal. He has a hoose rent free; all his coals and water are led to his door for almost nought—that is, he only pays a few pence a fortnight for leading. A school's found for his children, and when he's working full toime he can earn as much wages as many a mon who's had a fair eddication and sits all day at a desk. Hoose-rent, and coals, and eddication aren't bad things to hav' for next to nothing; and if a pitman is a real worker, and sober and clever, he's pretty certain to rise. Many o' the chief viewers in these parts hav' been colliers; so hav' some of t' principal owners. You see oor great point is to keep oor men's working power at full pitch, and to waaste none of it; and every pit in t' north has a regular staff of helpers and surveyors like, besoides the pitmen. Here, now, in the very spot you're down in now, we've a manager who's a first-rate practical coal engineer (he wer' once a pitman, and has raised hisself by work). Often, mind you, there's a head-manager who, besides, looks after several collieries, and is a scientific mon, who'll have a salary and commission of a thousand or more a year. Then comes the under-viewer, whose nearly allus come up from t' ranks. He goes down t' pit ivvery day, and reports, generally in writing, upon t' state of t' workings, whether t' arches want roofing, whether there's any escape of gas, state of t' roads, t' quantities worked, and such like. Under him are overmen, deppities, and firemen, all helping in superintendence; and then there's fillers, and pitters, and getters—the last being those who actually get the coal. Ivvery thing's done wi' us to keep t' men to their real work, and not to let 'em fritter away their time by undertakking hauf-a-duzzin' things—ower many. Them little ponies are not much bigger than Newfoundland dogs, and t' lads with 'em are not ovver large. That's to keep down t' size of t' headways and t' workings. You see each working, or what I dare say you'd ca' each passage, mun' be as high as the biggest thing that hes tu gang through it. *That's* reason, aren't it? And if we were to use horses and men instead of ponies and lads, it would just mak' a difference of thousands o' pounds to t' owners. Not so much in the six-foot workings you've been through to-day. T' seam o' coal reaches as deep as that, and it pays well enoo' to get it oot. But weer there's stone above and stone below perhaps, and t' coal's only perhaps three or four feet high, to mak' a spot big enough for a horse wo'd be just madness. Ponies do t' work ivvery bit as well too, for we've t' trams made in proportion and quickly filled. We work double shifts here too, that is, hauf our getters work for eight hours, an' the rest for another eight; t' remaining eight of t' twenty-fower bein' takken up wi' inspection and firemen work. Then we've three men at a face, so as to work it out, and go on to another as quick as possible. I'm certain it's best. You'll find a different method in Waales, weer you say you're going; but our plan of hevving ivverything brought down to t' smallest compass, and compressing t' men's work as much as possible, ansers roight weel, and we dinna seek to mend it. For small parts weer t' seam runs varry narrow, we've small 'corbs,' wi' sharp kiels at t' bottom, which t' men can shove before 'em; and t' workings are theer only big enough for a mon to creep alang shoving his corb in front of him. We sometimes lose t' seam for a bit, and find it fallen or risen for sivveral yards. Look here now (tapping a stratum at the side of the dark passage with his divining-rod), these marks show us weer we sho'd foind it again: if they run up, t' coal will be above us; if they run down, t' seam will be below. (Turning round quickly to what was a distant and flickering glowworm a moment ago, but is now a grimy man dangling a lantern.) Weel, Tom lad, thoo'se come to work, hes thee? Good lad, good lad!" From this time the lights and voices become frequent, and "the second shift," or reserve army, come in for their eight hours' work. Our guide's accent became broader and deeper as he addressed them, and the tone and manner of their replies were highly suggestive of a sturdy, free-and-easy independence. When, too, we have squatted on the cage for the ascent, four miners, whose turn of work is over, jump on with us after the bell has rung for starting. Of course they'd more right there than we had, and we prudently held our tongues; but for all that I couldn't help feeling injured when one black mass of animated coal-dust plumped down upon my knee, and another familiarly held on with a naked, blackened, and recently perspiring arm about my neck.

Three days later I am in South Wales—in a fertile valley surrounded by lofty hills which rise and fall in graceful undulations against an horizon murky with coal smoke. Pits are everywhere. Coal is apparently at every corner, and iron to be had for the working, which has been discontinued latterly as unremunerative. The pilasters supporting the balcony which stretch from end to end of the mansion I am staying at are of iron extracted from the soil around;

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the railway running by the lodge-gate carries coal down to the sea-port a dozen miles off; the new buildings and improvements, the mended roads, the enlarged houses, the erections for machinery, the schools, the capital amateur band which greeted us by playing outside our window during dinner on the night of our arrival, are all due to coal. "How does the system here differ from that in the north?" repeated the young engineer who accompanied me to see a new method of ventilation at work. "Why principally in lack of intelligence and obstinacy of prejudice. There's no double shift here, to begin with—the men work twelve hours at a stretch, and then knock off altogether; they only employ one man and a boy to 'a face,' instead of three men as in Northumberland and Durham, and the miners 'prop,' the roofways for themselves, instead of leaving it to people whose regular business it is. Then, they employ big horses and enormous trams; so that each working is thrice the size it need be. And what is the result? Why just this: With coal which is more easily got, and with the finest quality of coal for steam purposes in the world, with abundance of material and plenty of hands, the population here is worse off, and the coal more expensive to procure, than in any other district I know. There cannot be a question as to its superiority, for the government have been trying a series of experiments as to how much steam a given quantity of it would produce against the same amount of northern coal, and the result has been that they've decided in favour of the former. It's all want of system from first to last; but the people about here are so conservative, that when you propose any improvement they at once look on you as a personal enemy of the Principality. What can be more senseless than letting one man and a boy fiddle for a twelvemonth at a face, which three men would exhaust in a third of the time? Yet it is done, because it's the custom of the country, and for no other reason whatever. Remember the expense, too! For the longer a face is worked at, of course, the more it costs, as the maintenance and wear and tear of props, arching, and what you may call permanent way add enormously to the price of production. In the other case a working is exhausted, and another begun, in the time it takes to get one fairly started here; and, of course, when it is not wanted as a roadway to anywhere else, it can just be left to take care of itself, or blocked up at no cost to speak of. You'll perhaps remember that the coal you saw in the north," continues our informant, "takes good stiff work with pick and shoulders before it is dug out. Here, you may almost slip it off the seam with a walking-stick, so lightly does it lay. Yet no one gets the benefit, through the faulty plan pursued. As for the cost of horses against ponies, I daren't attempt to say what it is. Besides the size of the passage to be scooped out, a man has to be employed to drive, as well as a boy to lead, when, with a pony one boy would do all the work, and better; then there's the difference in the cost of the two animals, and the difference in their keep, so that it comes to a pretty penny altogether. As for letting each pitman prop his own roof as he works on, it's not merely silly, but wicked, for it wastes labour, and endangers life. How is it likely that a man whose proper function is to hew can turn his hand to a distinct branch of workmanship without disastrous results, as well as waste of time? For he has to go about and get his prop, mind, to carry it to the pit, and then to put it up in his own awkward way. To show you what I think of it, I'll venture to say there are as many deaths in collieries from roofs falling, through the amateur props giving way, as from any other simple cause connected with the mechanism of a pit. And, mind you, I'm not sure that, if statistics were carefully gone into, the explosions that shook every one so are the most serious foes to human life. But, keeping to the faults of the Welsh system, it seems to me too great a waste of human energies to make the men carry their own supply of coal home, instead of leading it to their doors. You'll see them after twelve hours' labour staggering to their cottages with a sack of coals upon their back, because "as much as they can carry" is their perquisite, and, though the trouble is saved, one can't help thinking that the additional work taken out of the labourer must tell upon his producing power. Perhaps you may think this a small matter; but to show what older and shrewder heads than mine think of the system altogether, I'll tell you what happened here last week. The Welsh coal-owners met in conclave at Cardiff, and determined to reduce wages fifteen per cent. One of their number, however, and the managing partner of the largest concerns hereabouts gave his men the option of receiving ten per cent out of the fifteen back again, if they'd agree to work on the English system. They actually hesitated, and refused at first; but they've come in since, and the offer was renewed for several of the large pits. I look upon this as the thin end of the wedge, and, in spite of local prejudice, am persuaded that the double shift, and the north-country mode of working generally, will come into play here to the advantage of all. Already, we're inaugurating some important improvements in machinery (opening a door, and showing a wheel, the size of a small house). This flapper at the top of the shaft acts instead of a furnace at the bottom, which is, after all, an objectionable and sometimes dangerous mode of ventilating a pit. Both create a vacuum which the fresh air rushes in to supply. But as this is worked by an engine, its speed can be regulated, so that on a damp day greater pressure can be put on, and the foul air withdrawn as fast as generated. You can't regulate a furnace with half the certainty you bring to bear on this; and if we succeed in making it do full duty for the old kind of ventilation, we quite believe that explosions and accidents will be made infinitely more rare. We're fixing some atmospheric engines, too, at another pit, which are to have some nine-inch

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cylinders attached to them, and to lessen human labour on the trams; but we won't say much about them, as we're not quite certain how they'll work. No! there hasn't been much prejudice against these things yet, perhaps, because they're not known; but our great difficulty is to deal with a people who reverence old habits as a religion, who are 'clannish' to an extent which makes trades-unionism unknown and unnecessary, who preserve their language and their prejudice as a sacred trust from their forefathers, and who regard all improvements and reforms with suspicion and distrust."

THE SQUIRE'S TEMPER-TRAP.

IN SEVEN CHAPTERS.

IV.

"You wished to see me, sir," said Mr. Rochford Hurbandine, sauntering into his father's study, and flipping off the lighted end of his cheroot as soon as he was within the door.

"I beg, sir, you will not deny yourself a moment's sensual gratification on *my* account," said the squire, politely. "Permit me to offer you a light."

"Thanks. I've done for the present," replied Mr. Rochford. "Castleton and I are going for a trot in the village, and, not to be vulgar, go in for the universal cla-ay."

"If Mr. Castleton and yourself would infuse a little variety into your afternoon excursions," said the squire, with the same suavity as before, "it would, I think, afford increased gratification to all parties concerned. With beautiful rides in all directions——"

"We prefer the life of the village," said Mr. Rochford, calmly.

"The livers, sir, are surely beneath the notice of gentlemen of such lofty fashion," remarked Mr. Hurbandine, with some asperity.

"'The proper study of mankind is man,'" said his son.

"And, therefore, not exclusively *woman*, sir," retorted the squire. "If your visits had reference to our general improvement—the advancement of cottage architecture, the progress of my village schools—I should have nothing but thanks to offer. As it is, I fear that the introduction of the Mayfair element into Llbwyddcoed will resemble that chemical combination which results in a report and a conflagration."

"The young ladies in whose birth, parentage, and general training you are so philanthropically interested seemed gratified with our respectful homage."

"I have no doubt of it," returned his father. "They don't see such a brace of finished puppies every day. Did it strike you, however, that their tolerance of your 'homage,' as you call it, might have been partly owing to their respect for *me*?"

"It assuredly did not, sir," said Mr. Rochford, frankly.

"You now comprehend my wishes, sir," said the squire, growing angry. "Your proceedings elsewhere I cannot control. Here, at least, I will be master."

Mr. Rochford coughed.

"What do you mean, sir?" asked his father, sternly.

Mr. Rochford opened his great blue languid eyes to their utmost extent, and looked at his father for a moment, as if striving to comprehend him past any mistake. Then he burst into a low well-bred laugh. "I mean, my dear father, that we could not, in any case, espouse the entire village; nor have I, believe me, the slightest intention of presenting another Sukey Bubbs for your paternal benediction."

"No, sir, I suspect you of no such sensible purpose," replied the squire, his face darkening. "But may I ask how the Lady Susan Vavasour has merited this polite tribute to her memory?"

"Simply by being born Bubbs," said Mr. Rochford. "A family misfortune, sir—no more."

"You forget, perhaps, that your great-grandfather was a small farmer?" said Mr. Hurbandine.

"*One* of them was," replied his son. "His maternal colleague was a peer. Speed the plough, sir, as much as you please, but don't run it over my mother's ancestors."

The incautious words had barely left his lips when the squire, his eyes blazing with rage, sprang from his chair and confronted him so closely, that for an instant the young man apprehended violence.

"Insult me to my face, you puppy! you cold-blooded offshoot of a race of effete boobies, with not so much red blood in their whole line as would paint an ace of hearts!" thundered the angry squire. "Leave the room, sir! Begone! And mark this," he added, sinking his voice to a lower but not less furious tone; "see that I do not give you a second Sukey Bubbs for your *mother*!"

"What say you to a stretch across the hills, Tom?" said young Hurbandine to Mr. Castleton, who was playing at croquet by himself on the lawn.

"In a balloon?" inquired his friend, shading his eyes, and pretending to survey the heights in question with great alarm.

"They have been pronounced accessible," said Rochford. "At least, my aunt, Lady Clamborough, scaled one of the loftier peaks last year in her Bath chair, attended only by her fat lap-dog and one devoted page, and actually returned to dinner! But she was a remarkably plucky person at eighty; and if you really think——"

"Say no more. I share the peril and the glory," said Mr. Castleton, flinging away his mallet.

"Still, if you have anything to do in the village."

"But I haven't. On my *word*, now, I haven't," said the Honourable Tom, promptly. "To-day I'm in a mountain mood. Away!"

That Mr. Castleton's mood inclined to the mountain rather than the plain might have been partly due to the fact that he had in his pocket

at that moment a letter, conveying in distinct, not to say emphatic, terms an invitation to a fistic encounter with a gentleman named Cornelius Podgerbot, whose feelings had been outraged by his—the Honourable Tom's—bearing in reference to one "Ally Davis of the mill." For, though far from being deficient in courage, Mr. Castleton's soul revolted at the idea of actual personal conflict, and the prospect of a possible defeat at the hands of the burly clown was intolerable.

Lighting their pipes at the lodge, and sending back word from thence that they might not return to dinner, the two gentlemen accordingly set forth.

It was late when they returned, for the ascent *had* proved practicable, and there was even a very comfortable inn—the Welsh Harp—at the top, at which the enterprising travellers obtained a dinner that would not have discredited Francatelli, accompanied by an appetite that not even *he* could provide. It was still daylight, however, when, on nearing the lodge, they met Gerald Hurbandine striding hastily along.

"Anxious about us?" asked Mr. Castleton, with feeling. "Really, my dear Hurbandine, this is too—too much." (He wiped his eyes with the cuff of his coat.) "'Touching anecdote of an elder brother!'"

Gerald laughed, but seemed disposed to continue his way.

"I shall be back in half an hour," said he.

His brother took him aside.

"Is all right? Where's the governor?"

"About the grounds, I think. *Why?*" asked Gerald.

"Sweet?"

"As sugar. Again, why?"

"He does not suspect *you*. Gerald, I know where you are going. Take my advice," said the young man, earnestly—"don't."

"I must and will," replied Gerald, his forehead flushing. "She is alone to-night—alone at the farm. I have not had such a chance these six months."

"Rude to whisper in company," said Mr. Castleton. "I think I shall leave you. I also think I felt a drop alight on my nose."

"It *does* rain," said Rochford. "Come, Gerald. Well, if you *will*," he added, as the other turned away, "take my overcoat. I don't like the sky." And he flung him that garment (of a light fawn-colour), which he was carrying on his arm.

"Thanks, old fellow." And Gerald, throwing it over his shoulders, hastened away.

V.

It was a fact, howsoever Gerald arrived at the knowledge of it, that "my lady" Katy was alone that evening at the little farm-house, the usual week-day garrison, an old woman and two stout boys, having gone to a neighbouring fair. But they would, of course, return before night, when Katy would, in all probability, trip across the fields to the town mansion in Llbwyddcoed.

As young Hurbandine hurried along, he debated whether he would abide this chance or boldly attack the cottage. In the former case, Katy might not be alone; in the latter, she certainly would be; and that which Gerald had resolved upon demanded both time and secresy. A side door, standing ajar, decided him; but, though conscious of an ally within, a whisper in Katy's heart that stood his friend, a tremor unusual with him—arising, perhaps, from the consciousness of taking an unfair advantage—checked him, as he raised his hand to knock. After a moment's irresolution, he pushed the door a little wider open. Katy was before him.

Her back was towards the door, and, intent on her occupation, she was as yet unconscious of any beholder. The queen of beauty of Llbwyddcoed was not attired in satin and gold. She was neither working tapestry nor playing the lute. Her dress was a very full, short petticoat of some grey stuff, disclosing, as the wearer bent over her work, a beauty and amount of limb rarely vouchsafed to the gaze of mortal man; for Katy's heart was not purer than her taste, and, fair as she seemed, her ordinary attire rather disguised than augmented her loveliness. She had thrown off, for the moment's exigence, her upper dress, and pearly shoulders and rounded arms were having it all their own way, in a manner so entrancing that it was no wonder Gerald stood rooted to the ground, like the bold hunter who surprised Diana.

The bewitching creature was doing something with a tub, but whether with milk or meal—inasmuch as her arms emerged from the white contents hardly whiter than before—it would have been impossible to say.

"Katy!"

The girl sprang round, as if a shot had struck her. The next instant the colour rushed into her face. She snatched her scarlet cloak from a clothes-horse that stood near, and wrapping it hastily round her neck and bosom, confronted her visitor with an air that had in it certainly more of anger than of love.

"It seems you knew that I was left *alone!*" she said, in a voice of unmistakable resentment.

Gerald pointed to the open door.

"That is part of my excuse. For the rest, time is precious. I have that to say——"

"You will leave the house, without another word," said Katy. "*Then*, I am not sure that I should be justified in listening to your excuses—even from the upper window."

"Consider my excuses made," said the young man; "and, for pity's sake, hear——"

"Not where you stand," returned the imperious young lady, as, with an air a duchess might have envied, she pointed to the door.

Policy, as well as good taste, suggested obedience, and Gerald, retreating, closed the door, and walked round the angle of the cottage into the little garden. As if to reward this docility, Katy presently opened the lower window—almost within arm's length. The brief interval had sufficed her nimble fingers to arrange her dress in its usual form, and when Katy appeared in the window, her face was

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calm and rather pale. There was, moreover, a look of resolution in the lucid blue eyes she bent upon her lover, which he did not at first understand.

"My lady," however, partook her father's taste for coming to the point; and, taking advantage of Gerald's momentary perplexity, did so now.

"You did wrong in coming hither, Mr. Hurbandine," she began.

"My name is Gerald, Katy," put in Gerald, softly.

"And mine Taffey," said Katy. "It is no matter; you did wrong, as I said, in coming—but, strange to say, I wished to see you, and——"

"Strange!"

"Your imprudence and selfishness have done me harm—much harm and wrong," continued the girl, her tears rising. "I have warned—reproached—entreated, in vain. Now, I have to tell you, you will never——"

"Stop. Will you not listen?" pleaded Gerald.

"Certainly, if *you* will," said Katy, with a sad little smile. "*My* speech first—it may shorten the discussion. My mother has spoken to me, and does not, I am afraid, quite believe that I have done all in my power to check this—what shall I call it?—this habit, this fancy of yours, for singling me out, among the other village girls, for the high favour of your notice."

"Not so, Katy. I have ever been most guarded——"

"In the presence of your father. Yes," said Katy. "To do you justice, nothing, on those occasions, could be stonier—more becoming, that is—than your demeanour. Your brother is more daring. He smiles!"

"He did so for my sake—and yours," added Gerald, hastily."

"To distract papa's attention from the really naughty boy," said Katy, with a curl of the lip, which, nevertheless, quivered in the act. "It is very kind of Mr. Rochford. Indeed, you are both very kind—very thoughtful—for yourselves. On *my* account, at least, Mr. Hurbandine, you shall have no more trouble. Let this little amusement end. It has served its turn, and London must be pining for your reappearance. Henceforth, I am the blacksmith's daughter; you, the squire's son. And if I am entitled to any wages for my part in the pretty little play, let it be *this*"—and the girl drew herself up with unconscious dignity—"that neither yourself nor your brother presume to address me again. Do not, Mr. Hurbandine, do me the wrong of believing this coquetry or caprice. These arts are for high-bred ladies in London. Here, we show what we feel, and mean what we say. Our acquaintance is ended. Now——Who is that?" she added, with a look of unmistakable alarm.

"Who? What? Where?" exclaimed Gerald.

"I thought some one stood in the shubbery-path, and moved away when I cried out!" said Katy: "I—I am not quite myself. Perhaps it was my fancy," she added. "Now, go."

"Now for my speech," was Gerald's reply, as he moved a step nearer to the window. "I, too, have made my resolutions. I have been dreaming, but I awoke to-day; and to what conviction, what reality? Even this, my darling—that the whole tribe of Veres and Vavasours, from the remotest patriarch down to my humble self, are not to be weighed against one blacksmith's daughter, nay, not against her smallest finger or one lock of her silken hair!" He stopped for an instant. "Katy, will you marry me? Love, will you be my *wife?*"

The girl, white with emotion, pressed her hands to her bosom.

"Mr. Gerald!" she gasped.

"Say Gerald, and I am answered," pleaded the lover.

"But—your father——?"

"Leave that to me. All will be well. Speak, dear—your answer?"

"You are foolish, and I am wrong," said Katy, after a moment's struggle; "but—but—I love you, dear," and she burst into a passion of tears.

VI.

It was a few minutes before the satisfactory termination of the quarrel just described, that the worthy squire, while pausing, in his evening stroll, to prune a tree, was, to his great astonishment, cannoned against by a young man, who, with his dress disordered, and a face inflamed with heat and passion, came dashing through the trees, as if regardless of all obstructions.

"Hallo, Tom Fullafield! what game's this?" shouted the squire, recovering his equilibrium.

"It's a providence—squire—findin' you here," gasped the young farmer. "Go you on to the corner, *that's* leadin' to Taffey's farm—and—and you'll see."

"See! See what, man? Rick on fire?"

"Worse, you'll say," returned young Fullafield, with a sullen fierceness that provoked the impatient squire into grasping him by the collar.

"What d'ye mean, you blockhead?" he thundered. "Have you lost both brains and tongue?"

"There's your son a-kissin' Taffey's daughter, that's all," returned Thomas, choking with excitement and insensate rage.

"My son? Which?"

"Mr. Rochford—curse him!" added Tom, in a lower voice.

The squire's eye flashed, but he displayed no outward anger.

"Get home, Fullafield," he said; "compose yourself, and say nothing."

He turned and strode away.

"The boy defies me, then? He shall repent it! Aye, to the next generation!" he muttered, furiously.

At the turn of the road, the little farm-house, indeed, came into view. It was now dark, but forms were clearly distinguishable, and it so chanced that, at the moment the squire obtained a view of what was going forward, Gerald was being permitted to take (through the window) a parting embrace of her whom he now regarded as his affianced wife. The brothers

were much alike, in build and stature. The squire's eye caught the familiar light-brown overcoat usually worn by Rochford, and not a doubt that it was his younger son ever entered his mind. He ground his teeth together, and his face grew white, as he vowed in his mind to execute a certain resolution to which he had been striving to come. He turned, and hurried homeward.

Suddenly, a suspicion occurred to him.

"Can the boy be in earnest? Is it possible that, in spite of his disdainful denial, he is willing to make that pretty girl his wife? I will test him, at least," thought the squire. "Youth is changeable. Yes, that's but fair."

Rochford, on returning, as he said, from the stables, was informed that he was again required in the library.

"Rochford," said the squire, "I spoke hotly to you this morning, but I think you will acknowledge that I have not been, on the whole, an arbitrary, tyrannical, or even an irritable parent."

His son—not without a shade of compunction for his own shortcomings—admitted that such was the fact.

"You will have less hesitation, then," resumed the squire, "in owning the exact truth, although it may not be in strict accordance with what you have already given me to understand."

"As yet, I do not comprehend your meaning, sir," said Rochford.

"You told me, this morning, that nothing should induce you to present 'another Sukey Bubbs' for my paternal blessing. By that sarcasm you meant, I presume, that you would not condescend to marry beneath your station?"

"You are right, sir. That was my meaning," replied the young man, steadily.

"Take care, Rochford; you cannot have forgotten our conversation of the morning, nor my strongly expressed desire that you should henceforth refrain from your harmful intercourse with my cottage tenantry. Now, take care," said the squire, biting his lip ominously.

"I have neither forgotten your commands nor the emphasis with which they were delivered," replied his son, whose inclination to retort too frequently overcame him.

"Then what do you mean by your conduct since?" thundered the squire.

"Since when? Restrain yourself, sir, if you *can*," said the young man, haughtily; "and suffer me to understand of what I am accused. I have done nothing contrary to your commands."

"That is a falsehood, sir!"

Rochford started to his feet.

"A falsehood!"

"Am I not to believe my own eyes and ears?" shouted the squire, his passion increasing every moment. "You have disobeyed me. Now you would deceive me. Is *this* the honour of the Veres and Vavasours, of which you are so tender? There is not a lout on my land that does not better understand the word. You shall repent this. Yes, before you are a day older, you shall bitterly regret your defiance of me. Have you anything to say?" he added, as his son turned to leave the room.

"Not one word, sir," said the young man, proudly. And the squire was alone.

The morning that succeeded this interview was bright and fresh, tempting more than one habitually early bird to be astir earlier still. Among these were Messrs. Taffey and Apreece, who lingered for a moment at the forge-door, in conversation.

"That's most as passed," Mr. Taffey was remarking; "and I'm glad it wan't more. He's a good heart, and a wile temper—that's how *I* reads him. And if he'd make up his mind for to marry any one as 'ood *ketch* that wile temper, an' let it fly out o' the winder, as my lady did as is gone, there'd be no better man. Hullo! Talk of the——Hem! here's the squire himself."

It was, indeed, Mr. Hurbandine who came trotting briskly down the street, and reined up at the forge.

"A word with you alone, Taffey."

The smith beckoned one of his swarthy followers to take the squire's horse, and they walked a little apart.

"Taffey," said Mr. Hurbandine, laying his hand on the smith's sleeve, "I have made up my mind to marry again."

The honest smith could not forbear a start, so aptly did the remark succeed to his late conversation with Apreece. But why come to *him?* Did the squire think that he could forge him a wife to order? His doubts were instantly resolved.

"You have a daughter, my old friend," continued the squire, "fair, modest, sweet, intelligent. She is worthy of any station. *She* is seventeen; *I* am forty-seven. If she were willing to sacrifice her bright youth, to partake the lot of such a patriarch as I must appear to her, give her me to wife. Be sure that I will deal with your precious flower as tenderly, with affection as observant and as confiding, as any lowlier lover whom I may have baulked of the prize. What say you?"

Mr. Taffey was far too much bewildered to say anything. He could only stare at the eager speaker, shift from one leg to the other, take off his cap and put it on again, and wish for his wife.

As if the squire had divined this thought, he proposed an instant reference to that lady. To the cottage they went. Fate willed that Mrs. Taffey should be "out and about." So vague an indication of her whereabouts was too much for the impatient squire, and, Katy being in her apartment, Mr. Taffey was prevailed on, much against his inclination, to undertake the office of plenipotentiary, and lay before his daughter the singular proposal, in which he himself could hardly yet believe.

"They did say as she should marry a lord," thought Mr. Taffey, as he went out, scratching his head; "and a squire's next door to'n."

He was absent so long that the squire, finding the suspense intolerable, was about to disturb the conference, when the ambassador returned, somewhat flushed and out of sorts.

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"She won't ha' nothing to say to 't till she have seen *you*, squire," was the announcement.

"Devilish right of her," said the honest squire; "I like her the better for it."

"She've something on her mind, which you won't like so well, I do fear," remarked Mr. Taffey, doubtfully. "Here she is."

Katy entered, as he spoke, deadly pale, eyes a little red. She wore the dress of homely grey, in which she was wont to go about her cottage work; but the richest, the most studied attire could have added nothing to the grace and dignity of the girl's manner as she curtseyed, with a sort of lofty respect, to the lord of Llbwyddcoed. The latter, on his part, thought that he had never seen her to such advantage; for, in addition to the beauty with which he was familiar, there was in her countenance an expression of intense feeling that gave to every lineament life and speech.

"Katy——" began the squire. But she stopped him.

"Please, Mr. Hurbandine, before you say one word more, permit me to ask a question."

"Twenty, my dear," said the squire.

"Did you see your son last night?"

"I did."

"Did you speak of—of *me*?"

"Of nothing else," replied the squire.

"I must have misunderstood my father, then," said Katy, the colour rising in her cheeks.

"And why so, my dear child?" asked the puzzled squire.

"Because," returned Katy, fixing her clear eyes steadily on him—"because your son, if he told you *anything*, must have told you that *he* had asked me to become his wife, and that I had consented."

"Merciful Heaven, child! what are you saying?" ejaculated Mr. Hurbandine, in his turn growing pale. "My son asked you to be his *wife*?" Katy mistook his meaning.

"If you have not combined to insult me," she said, haughtily, "and if I understood your message, it was an honour his father did not disdain."

"*My* proposal was in earnest, my poor child," said the squire, divided between anger and sorrow.

"And *his*?" half whispered the girl.

"A lie!" shouted the squire. "A villanous deceit!—the common pretext of a libertine, whose other arts have failed. Alas! that I should live to say it of my son! Child, child! he had no thought of marriage. I gave him the opportunity of breaking it to me. I spoke with leniency—nay, with approbation—of a similar union once contracted in my family. He sneered it down. No, he is a rascal—the first, thank Heaven, in my line. There is no taint upon the honour of *my* ancestors; and the Veres and Vavasours, if boobies, are not blackguards. Forget him, my poor Katy."

The cottage-girl took him up unexpectedly. Making one step towards him, she looked him once more steadily in the face.

"Your son informed you, last night, that he had no intention of making me his wife?"

"He distinctly repeated a declaration he had made to me in the morning, that nothing should induce him to marry beneath his station—my consent (I conclude) notwithstanding."

"Fresh from my presence!" murmured Katy.

"Even so," said the squire, sadly.

"Mr. Hurbandine," resumed the girl, raising her eyes suddenly, with a light in them he had not seen before, "if I could believe this insult possible——"

"Katy! you doubt my word! But go on. *If*——"

"I would say, do with me as you please," said Katy, turning her crimson face from the squire to her father, which latter gentleman had been a silent, not to say bewildered, spectator of this scene.

"What further proof do you require, Katy?" inquired Mr. Hurbandine. "Would you hear from his own lips the confirmation of what I have told you?"

"Then, indeed, I could not doubt," said Katy. "But, oh! sir, if you had heard him!" The proud head drooped forward, to conceal the tear that would not be denied.

"Then, so you shall!" exclaimed the squire. "But, see, Katy. In your father's presence, I hold you to your pledge. If my son rejects the treasure of your wifely love, it is mine, mine!—and he that dared insult your innocence with his profligate vows shall see you seated where his mother sat, the mistress of Llbwyddcoed. Taffey, my good friend, you are witness of our compact. This very morning must decide all. Explain everything to your good wife; bid her soothe and guard my precious Kate, and come up with her—you also, my old friend—to the hall about noon. Leave the rest to me.

He was gone.

VII.

The noonday sun was casting rich gleams through the stained-glass windows of the squire's library, and directing a particularly bright one upon the face of Lady Susan Vavasour (born Bubbs), at whom Mr. Hurbandine stood gazing with an interest even more than common.

"I hate eavesdropping," said the squire, leaving the picture, and beginning to pace the room. "It's a shabby thing at best; but in this case—at least, in my humble judgment—'tis the best and shortest way. Half a dozen words, and there an end! Whereas we may go on fending and fencing, and proving and doubting, for a week without it. Yes, better so," concluded the honest squire, as, with a slightly heightened colour, he took a large light screen that leaned against the wall, and, opening it, drew it across the room in such a manner as to conceal a door that opened upon a side-staircase.

At that door he listened for a moment.

"They are coming!"

The next moment Mr. and Mrs. Taffey, with Katy, made their appearance under the guidance of a trusty old servant of the squire's, who withdrew.

The two elder visitors spoke in whispers, and

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walked on tiptoe, like a pair of respectable married burglars. Mr. Taffey had with difficulty been prevailed upon not to leave his boots at the foot of the stairs. Katy followed, with a face and air outwardly calm and composed enough, but a deadly pallor succeeded to the blush with which she had acknowledged the squire's greeting, and she found herself compelled to accept one of the chairs he had hastily placed for her mother and herself. There she forced herself to sit, with a cold judicial air, waiting for her doom.

The squire had hardly seated himself in his accustomed place, when Rochford, summoned by the old servant, made his appearance.

"Sit down, Rochford," said his father, in a conciliatory tone. "Our last two interviews have not had results as satisfactory as I could desire."

"The third time is proverbially lucky, sir," said the young man, smiling. "I am here to know your pleasure."

"My pleasure is your happiness," returned the squire. "Make me your friend, Roch. Have no mental reservation with me in regard to what I am about to say. Will you promise?"

"I do, sir," said the young man, after a moment's pause.

"Enough. What are your feelings—what your object—with respect to Katy Taffey?"

There was a slight movement behind the screen, but neither gentlemen observed it.

Rochford had hesitated for an instant, then he said: "Will you, in your turn, promise me, my dear father, if my answer does not please you, to restrain your anger?"

"I will, Roch. On my honour, by your mother's memory," said the squire, with feeling, "I will."

"Then, sir," said Rochford, rising, "I repeat my twice-made declaration. I do not love the girl; and, if I did, such are the prejudices I was born with, that I would not marry her."

"You are a greater scoundrel than I took you for!" said the squire, in a distinct but perfectly controlled voice. "No heroics, if you please," he added; for Rochford had sprung from his chair, as if his father had dealt him a blow. "Leave me, and blame yourself for what may follow."

Rochford looked silently at his father, and quitted the room.

The squire flung the screen aside.

But the girl, with a gesture almost of alarm, motioned him from her. She strove to utter some words, but failed, and fell helplessly into her mother's arms.

"What—what is this? Is she not content yet?" asked the perplexed squire. "Can tongue speak plainer? Tell me, Taffey, what can I do more?"

The smith passed his hand through his iron-grey locks.

"Well, squire—begging pardon," he said—"you knows I'm a houtspoken man, and, since you puts it to us wot you mought do, my missis thinks, and so do I, and we've been all a-thinking—on'y we didn't like for to be troublesome—that you'd better try the screen again, and just see what t' other 'll say!"

"T' other!" ejaculated the squire.

There was no time for further explanation, nor any need to replace the screen. Gerald, resolved to confess all to his father, entered the study at that moment for that very purpose.

Words were superfluous *then*. The eyes, the cheeks, of the young lovers told everything—everything that was essential to the squire's enlightenment. It was left for after-explanation how the incidental borrowing of a light-brown paletôt, by a gentleman who generally sported a dark one, had led to such serious complications and important discoveries.

The squire, frank and generous as he was quick and impulsive, accepted a solution far more apt and seemly than that he had, for a brief space, had in contemplation, and heartily lent himself to the fulfilment of his own prophecy. There *was* a marriage at Llbwyddcoed; and, if it was not a merry one, we, who were among the bidden, know not what mirth means. Patrician and plebeian guests united on this occasion in such harmony, and with such a community of good breeding, that it was almost impossible to say which was which. It was, however, noticeable that neither my Lord Leatherhead nor the Honourable Mr. Castleton was present.

Mr. Rochford, though gay and condescending at the festivity, had not, at that period, wholly forgiven his brother's choice. It was remarked that he never again wore that fawn-coloured paletôt which had indirectly contributed to the wooing of Katy, and shortly after presented it to his valet. It is to be presumed, however, that he has got over the prejudices he was "born with," being now engaged to a very amiable girl, the only daughter and heiress of David Black Dymond, Esq., the well-known millionnaire, who commenced his useful and prosperous career as a common miner at half-a-crown a day.

Some words caught our ear, as we wandered through the marriage throng, spoken by two gentlemen in very holiday garments, who were half concealed by a column in the hall. They were Mr. Apreece and Mr. Taffey.

"Nunc est bibendum," remarked the former, and there was a clinking of glasses, as in good fellowship.

"Werry much so," returned Mr. Taffey, "if by bend 'em means 'be civil.' If all great folks, like squire, would bend 'em a little more, 'twould be better going for all."

HOLIDAY ROMANCE,

BY CHARLES DICKENS,

Will be concluded in the MONTHLY PART for April.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE first words, when we had taken our seats, were spoken by my lady.

"Sergeant Cuff," she said, "there was perhaps some excuse for the inconsiderate manner in which I spoke to you half an hour since. I have no wish, however, to claim that excuse. I say, with perfect sincerity, that I regret it, if I wronged you."

The grace of voice and manner with which she made him that atonement had its due effect on the Sergeant. He requested permission to justify himself—putting his justification as an act of respect to my mistress. It was impossible, he said, that he could be in any way responsible for the calamity which had shocked us all, for this sufficient reason, that his success in bringing his inquiry to its proper end depended on his neither saying nor doing anything that could alarm Rosanna Spearman. He appealed to me to testify whether he had, or had not, carried that object out. I could, and did, bear witness that he had. And there, as I thought, the matter might have been judiciously left to come to an end.

Sergeant Cuff, however, took it a step further, evidently (as you shall now judge) with the purpose of forcing the most painful of all possible explanations to take place between her ladyship and himself.

"I have heard a motive assigned for the young woman's suicide," said the Sergeant, "which may possibly be the right one. It is a motive quite unconnected with the case which I am conducting here. I am bound to add, however, that my own opinion points the other way. Some unbearable anxiety, in connexion with the missing Diamond, has, as I believe, driven the poor creature to her own destruction. I don't pretend to know what that unbearable anxiety may have been. But I think (with your ladyship's permission) I can lay my hand on a person who is capable of deciding whether I am right or wrong."

"Is the person now in the house?" my mistress asked, after waiting a little.

"The person has left the house, my lady."

That answer pointed as straight to Miss Rachel as straight could be. A silence dropped on us which I thought would never come to an end. Lord! how the wind howled, and how the rain drove at the window, as I sat there waiting for one or other of them to speak again!

"Be so good as to express yourself plainly," said my lady. "Do you refer to my daughter?"

"I do," said Sergeant Cuff, in so many words.

My mistress had her cheque-book on the table when we entered the room—no doubt to pay the Sergeant his fee. She now put it back in the drawer. It went to my heart to see how her poor hand trembled—the hand that had loaded her old servant with benefits; the hand that, I pray God, may take mine, when my time comes, and I leave my place for ever!

"I had hoped," said my lady, very slowly and quietly, "to have recompensed your services, and to have parted with you without Miss Verinder's name having been openly mentioned between us as it has been mentioned now. My nephew has probably said something of this, before you came into my room?"

"Mr. Blake gave his message, my lady. And I gave Mr. Blake a reason——"

"It is needless to tell me your reason. After what you have just said, you know as well as I do that you have gone too far to go back. I owe it to myself, and I owe it to my child, to insist on your remaining here, and to insist on your speaking out."

The Sergeant looked at his watch.

"If there had been time, my lady," he answered, "I should have preferred writing my report, instead of communicating it by word of mouth. But, if this inquiry is to go on, time is of too much importance to be wasted in writing. I am ready to go into the matter at once. It is a very painful matter for me to speak of, and for you to hear——"

There my mistress stopped him once more.

"I may possibly make it less painful to you, and to my good servant and friend here," she said, "if I set the example of speaking boldly, on my side. You suspect Miss Verinder of deceiving us all, by secreting the Diamond for some purpose of her own? Is that true?"

"Quite true, my lady."

"Very well. Now, before you begin, I have to tell you, as Miss Verinder's mother, that she is *absolutely incapable* of doing what you suppose her to have done. Your knowledge of her

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character dates from a day or two since. My knowledge of her character dates from the beginning of her life. State your suspicion of her as strongly as you please—it is impossible that you can offend me by doing so. I am sure, beforehand, that (with all your experience) the circumstances have fatally misled you in this case. Mind! I am in possession of no private information. I am as absolutely shut out of my daughter's confidence as you are. My one reason for speaking positively, is the reason you have heard already. I know my child."

She turned to me, and gave me her hand. I kissed it in silence. "You may go on," she said, facing the Sergeant again as steadily as ever.

Sergeant Cuff bowed. My mistress had produced but one effect on him. His hatchet-face softened for a moment, as if he was sorry for her. As to shaking him in his own conviction, it was plain to see that she had not moved him by a single inch. He settled himself in his chair; and he began his vile attack on Miss Rachel's character in these words:

"I must ask your ladyship," he said, "to look this matter in the face, from my point of view as well as from yours. Will you please to suppose yourself coming down here, in my place, and with my experience? and will you allow me to mention very briefly what that experience has been?"

My mistress signed to him that she would do this. The Sergeant went on:

"For the last twenty years," he said, "I have been largely employed in cases of family scandal, acting in the capacity of confidential man. The one result of my domestic practice which has any bearing on the matter now in hand, is a result which I may state in two words. It is well within my experience, that young ladies of rank and position do occasionally have private debts which they dare not acknowledge to their nearest relatives and friends. Sometimes, the milliner and the jeweller are at the bottom of it. Sometimes, the money is wanted for purposes which I don't suspect in this case, and which I won't shock you by mentioning. Bear in mind what I have said, my lady—and now let us see how events in this house have forced me back on my own experience, whether I liked it or not!"

He considered with himself for a moment, and went on—with a horrid clearness that obliged you to understand him; with an abominable justice that favoured nobody.

"My first information relating to the loss of the Moonstone," said the Sergeant, "came to me from Superintendent Seegrave. He proved to my complete satisfaction that he was perfectly incapable of managing the case. The one thing he said which struck me as worth listening to, was this—that Miss Verinder had declined to be questioned by him, and had spoken to him with a perfectly incomprehensible rudeness and contempt. I thought this curious—but I attributed it mainly to some clumsiness on the Superintendent's part which might have offended the young lady. After that, I put it by in my mind, and applied myself, single-handed, to the case. It ended, as you are aware, in the discovery of the smear on the door, and in Mr. Franklin Blake's evidence satisfying me, that this same smear, and the loss of the Diamond, were pieces of the same puzzle. So far, if I suspected anything, I suspected that the Moonstone had been stolen, and that one of the servants might prove to be the thief. Very good. In this state of things, what happens? Miss Verinder suddenly comes out of her room, and speaks to me. I observe three suspicious appearances in that young lady. She is still violently agitated, though more than four-and-twenty hours have passed since the Diamond was lost. She treats me, as she has already treated Superintendent Seegrave. And she is mortally offended with Mr. Franklin Blake. Very good again. Here (I say to myself) is a young lady who has lost a valuable jewel—a young lady, also, as my own eyes and ears inform me, who is of an impetuous temperament. Under these circumstances, and with that character, what does she do? She betrays an incomprehensible resentment against Mr. Blake, Mr. Superintendent, and myself—otherwise, the very three people who have all, in their different ways, been trying to help her to recover her lost jewel. Having brought my inquiry to that point—*then*, my lady, and not till then, I begin to look back into my own mind for my own experience. My own experience explains Miss Verinder's otherwise incomprehensible conduct. It associates her with those other young ladies that I know of. It tells me she has debts she daren't acknowledge, that must be paid. And it sets me asking myself, whether the loss of the Diamond may not mean—that the Diamond must be secretly pledged to pay them. That is the conclusion which my experience draws from plain facts. What does your ladyship's experience say against it?"

"What I have said already," answered my mistress. "The circumstances have misled you."

I said nothing on my side. Robinson Crusoe—God knows how—had got into my muddled old head. If Sergeant Cuff had found himself, at that moment, transported to a desert island, without a man Friday to keep him company, or a ship to take him off—he would have found himself exactly where I wished him to be! (*Nota bene*:—I am an average good Christian, when you don't push my Christianity too far. And all the rest of you—which is a great comfort—are, in this respect, much the same as I am.)

Sergeant Cuff went on:

"Right or wrong, my lady," he said, "having drawn my conclusion, the next thing to do was to put it to the test. I suggested to your ladyship the examination of all the wardrobes in the house. It was a means of finding the article of dress which had, in all probability, made the smear; and it was a means of putting my

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conclusion to the test. How did it turn out? Your ladyship consented; Mr. Blake consented; Mr. Ablewhite consented. Miss Verinder alone stopped the whole proceeding by refusing point-blank. That result satisfied me that my view was the right one. If your ladyship and Mr. Betteredge persist in not agreeing with me, you must be blind to what happened before you this very day. In your hearing, I told the young lady that her leaving the house (as things were then) would put an obstacle in the way of my recovering her jewel. You saw yourselves that she drove off in the face of that statement. You saw yourselves that, so far from forgiving Mr. Blake for having done more than all the rest of you to put the clue into my hands, she publicly insulted Mr. Blake, on the steps of her mother's house. What do these things mean? If Miss Verinder is not privy to the suppression of the Diamond, what do these things mean?"

This time he looked my way. It was downright frightful to hear him piling up proof after proof against Miss Rachel, and to know, while one was longing to defend her, that there was no disputing the truth of what he said. I am (thank God!) constitutionally superior to reason. This enabled me to hold firm to my lady's view, which was my view also. This roused my spirit, and made me put a bold face on it before Sergeant Cuff. Profit, good friends, I beseech you, by my example. It will save you from many troubles of the vexing sort. Cultivate a superiority to reason, and see how you pare the claws of all the sensible people when they try to scratch you for your own good!

Finding that I made no remark, and that my mistress made no remark, Sergeant Cuff proceeded. Lord! how it did enrage me to notice that he was not in the least put out by our silence!

"There is the case, my lady, as it stands against Miss Verinder alone," he said. "The next thing is to put the case as it stands against Miss Verinder and the deceased Rosanna Spearman, taken together. We will go back for a moment, if you please, to your daughter's refusal to let her wardrobe be examined. My mind being made up, after that circumstance, I had two questions to consider next. First, as to the right method of conducting my inquiry. Second, as to whether Miss Verinder had an accomplice among the female servants in the house. After carefully thinking it over, I determined to conduct the inquiry in, what we should call at our office, a highly irregular manner. For this reason: I had a family scandal to deal with, which it was my business to keep within the family limits. The less noise made, and the fewer strangers employed to help me, the better. As to the usual course of taking people in custody on suspicion, going before the magistrate, and all the rest of it—nothing of the sort was to be thought of, when your ladyship's daughter was (as I believed) at the bottom of the whole business. In this case, I felt that a person of Mr. Betteredge's character and position in the house—knowing the servants as he did, and having the honour of the family at heart—would be safer to take as an assistant than any other person whom I could lay my hand on. I should have tried Mr. Blake as well—but for one obstacle in the way. *He* saw the drift of my proceedings at a very early date; and, with his interest in Miss Verinder, any mutual understanding was impossible between him and me. I trouble your ladyship with these particulars to show you that I have kept the family secret within the family circle. I am the only outsider who knows it—and my professional existence depends on holding my tongue."

Here I felt that *my* professional existence depended on not holding *my* tongue. To be held up before my mistress, in my old age, as a sort of deputy-policeman was, once again, more than my Christianity was strong enough to bear.

"I beg to inform your ladyship," I said, "that I never, to my knowledge, helped this abominable detective business, in any way, from first to last; and I summon Sergeant Cuff to contradict me, if he dares!"

Having given vent in those words, I felt greatly relieved. Her ladyship honoured me by a little friendly pat on the shoulder. I looked with righteous indignation at the Sergeant to see what he thought of such a testimony as *that!* The Sergeant looked back like a lamb, and seemed to like me better than ever.

My lady informed him that he might continue his statement. "I understand," she said, "that you have honestly done your best, in what you believe to be my interest. I am ready to hear what you have to say next."

"What I have to say next," answered Sergeant Cuff, "relates to Rosanna Spearman. I recognised the young woman, as your ladyship may remember, when she brought the washing-book into this room. Up to that time I was inclined to doubt whether Miss Verinder had trusted her secret to any one. When I saw Rosanna, I altered my mind. I suspected her at once of being privy to the suppression of the Diamond. The poor creature has met her death by a dreadful end, and I don't want your ladyship to think, now she's gone, that I was unduly hard on her. If this had been a common case of thieving, I should have given Rosanna the benefit of the doubt just as freely as I should have given it to any of the other servants in the house. Our experience of the reformatory women is, that when tried in service—and when kindly and judiciously treated—they prove themselves in the majority of cases to be honestly penitent, and honestly worthy of the pains taken with them. But this was not a common case of thieving. It was a case—in my mind—of a deeply planned fraud, with the owner of the Diamond at the bottom of it. Holding this view, the first consideration which naturally presented itself to me, in connexion with Rosanna, was this. Would Miss

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Verinder be satisfied (begging your ladyship's pardon) with leading us all to think that the Moonstone was merely lost? Or would she go a step further, and delude us into believing that the Moonstone was stolen? In the latter event, there was Rosanna Spearman—with the character of a thief—ready to her hand; the person of all others to lead your ladyship off, and to lead me off, on a false scent."

Was it possible (I asked myself) that he could put his case against Miss Rachel and Rosanna in a more horrid point of view than this? It *was* possible, as you shall now see.

"I had another reason for suspecting the deceased woman," he said, "which appears to me to have been stronger still. Who would be the very person to help Miss Verinder in raising money privately on the Diamond? Rosanna Spearman. No young lady in Miss Verinder's position could manage such a risky matter as that by herself. A go-between she must have, and who so fit, I ask again, as Rosanna Spearman? Your ladyship's deceased housemaid was at the top of her profession when she was a thief. She had relations, to my certain knowledge, with one of the few men in London (in the money-lending line) who would advance a large sum on such a notable jewel as the Moonstone, without asking awkward questions, or insisting on awkward conditions. Bear this in mind, my lady; and now let me show you how my suspicions have been justified by Rosanna's own acts, and by the plain inferences to be drawn from them."

He thereupon passed the whole of Rosanna's proceedings under review. You are already as well acquainted with those proceedings as I am; and you will understand how unanswerably this part of his report fixed the guilt of being concerned in the disappearance of the Moonstone on the memory of the poor dead girl. Even my mistress was daunted by what he said now. She made him no answer when he had done. It didn't seem to matter to the Sergeant whether he was answered or not. On he went (devil take him!), just as steady as ever.

"Having stated the whole case as I understand it," he said, "I have only to tell your ladyship, now, what I propose to do next. I see two ways of bringing this inquiry successfully to an end. One of those ways I look upon as a certainty. The other, I admit, is a bold experiment, and nothing more. Your ladyship shall decide. Shall we take the certainty first?"

My mistress made him a sign to take his own way, and choose for himself.

"Thank you," said the Sergeant. "We'll begin with the certainty, as your ladyship is so good as to leave it to me. Whether Miss Verinder remains at Frizinghall, or whether she returns here, I propose, in either case, to keep a careful watch on all her proceedings—on the people she sees, on the rides or walks she may take, and on the letters she may write or receive."

"What next?" asked my mistress.

"I shall next," answered the Sergeant, "request your ladyship's leave to introduce into the house, as a servant in the place of Rosanna Spearman, a woman accustomed to private inquiries of this sort, for whose discretion I can answer."

"What next?" repeated my mistress.

"Next," proceeded the Sergeant, "and last, I propose to send one of my brother-officers to make an arrangement with that money-lender in London, whom I mentioned just now as formerly acquainted with Rosanna Spearman—and whose name and address, your ladyship may rely on it, have been communicated by Rosanna to Miss Verinder. I don't deny that the course of action I am now suggesting will cost money, and consume time. But the result is certain. We run a line round the Moonstone, and we draw that line closer and closer till we find it in Miss Verinder's possession, supposing she decides to keep it. If her debts press, and she decides on sending it away, then we have our man ready, and we meet the Moonstone on its arrival in London."

To hear her own daughter made the subject of such a proposal as this, stung my mistress into speaking angrily for the first time.

"Consider your proposal declined, in every particular," she said. "And go on to your other way of bringing the inquiry to an end."

"My other way," said the Sergeant, going on as easy as ever, "is to try that bold experiment to which I have alluded. I think I have formed a pretty correct estimate of Miss Verinder's temperament. She is quite capable (according to my belief) of committing a daring fraud. But she is too hot and impetuous in temper, and too little accustomed to deceit as a habit, to act the hypocrite in small things, and to restrain herself under all provocations. Her feelings, in this case, have repeatedly got beyond her control, at the very time when it was plainly her interest to conceal them. It is on this peculiarity in her character that I now propose to act. I want to give her a great shock suddenly, under circumstances which will touch her to the quick. In plain English, I want to tell Miss Verinder, without a word of warning, of Rosanna's death—on the chance that her own better feelings will hurry her into making a clean breast of it. Does your ladyship accept *that* alternative?"

My mistress astonished me beyond all power of expression. She instantly answered.

"Yes; I do."

"The pony-chaise is ready," said the Sergeant. "I wish your ladyship good morning."

My lady held up her hand, and stopped him at the door.

"My daughter's better feelings shall be appealed to, as you propose," she said. "But I claim the right, as her mother, of putting her to the test myself. You will remain here, if you please; and I will go to Frizinghall."

For once in his life, the great Cuff stood speechless with amazement, like an ordinary man.

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My mistress rang the bell, and ordered her waterproof things. It was still pouring with rain; and the close carriage had gone, as you know, with Miss Rachel to Frizinghall. I tried to dissuade her ladyship from facing the severity of the weather. Quite useless! I asked leave to go with her, and hold the umbrella. She wouldn't hear of it. The pony-chaise came round, with the groom in charge. "You may rely on two things," she said to Sergeant Cuff, in the hall. "I will try the experiment on Miss Verinder as boldly as you could try it yourself. And I will inform you of the result, either personally or by letter, before the last train leaves for London to-night."

With that, she stepped into the chaise, and, taking the reins herself, drove off to Frizinghall.

CHAPTER XXII.

My mistress having left us, I had leisure to think of Sergeant Cuff. I found him sitting in a snug corner of the hall, consulting his memorandum book, and curling up viciously at the corners of the lips.

"Making notes of the case?" I asked.

"No," said the Sergeant. "Looking to see what my next professional engagement is."

"Oh!" I said. "You think it's all over, then, here?"

"I think," answered Sergeant Cuff, "that Lady Verinder is one of the cleverest women in England. I also think a rose much better worth looking at than a diamond. Where is the gardener, Mr. Betteredge?"

There was no getting a word more out of him on the matter of the Moonstone. He had lost all interest in his own inquiry; and he would persist in looking for the gardener. An hour afterwards, I heard them at high words in the conservatory, with the dog-rose once more at the bottom of the dispute.

In the mean time, it was my business to find out whether Mr. Franklin persisted in his resolution to leave us by the afternoon train. After having been informed of the conference in my lady's room, and of how it had ended, he immediately decided on waiting to hear the news from Frizinghall. This very natural alteration in his plans—which, with ordinary people, would have led to nothing in particular—proved, in Mr. Franklin's case, to have one objectionable result. It left him unsettled, with a legacy of idle time on his hands, and in so doing it let out all the foreign sides of his character, one on the top of another, like rats out of a bag.

Now as an Italian-Englishman, now as a German-Englishman, and now as a French-Englishman, he drifted in and out of all the sitting-rooms in the house, with nothing to talk of but Miss Rachel's treatment of him; and with nobody to address himself to but me. I found him (for example) in the library, sitting under the map of Modern Italy, and quite unaware of any other method of meeting his troubles, except the method of talking about them. "I have several worthy aspirations, Betteredge; but what am I to do with them now? I am full of dormant good qualities, if Rachel would only have helped me to bring them out!" He was so eloquent in drawing the picture of his own neglected merits, and so pathetic in lamenting over it when it was done, that I felt quite at my wits' end how to console him, when it suddenly occurred to me that here was a case for the wholesome application of a bit of Robinson Crusoe. I hobbled out to my own room, and hobbled back with that immortal book. Nobody in the library! The map of Modern Italy stared at *me;* and *I* stared at the map of Modern Italy.

I tried the drawing-room. There was his handkerchief on the floor, to prove that he had drifted in. And there was the empty room, to prove that he had drifted out again.

I tried the dining-room, and discovered Samuel with a biscuit and a glass of sherry, silently investigating the empty air. A minute since, Mr. Franklin had rung furiously for a little light refreshment. On its production, in a violent hurry, by Samuel, Mr. Franklin had vanished before the bell down-stairs had quite done ringing with the pull he had given to it.

I tried the morning-room, and found him at last. There he was at the window, drawing hieroglyphics with his finger in the damp on the glass.

"Your sherry is waiting for you, sir," I said to him. I might as well have addressed myself to one of the four walls of the room; he was down in the bottomless deep of his own meditations, past all pulling up. "How do *you* explain Rachel's conduct, Betteredge?" was the only answer I received. Not being ready with the needful reply, I produced Robinson Crusoe, in which I am firmly persuaded some explanation might have been found, if we had only searched long enough for it. Mr. Franklin shut up Robinson Crusoe, and floundered into his German-English gibberish on the spot. "Why not look into it?" he said, as if I had personally objected to looking into it. "Why the devil lose your patience, Betteredge, when patience is all that's wanted to arrive at the truth? Don't interrupt me. Rachel's conduct is perfectly intelligible, if you will only do her the common justice to take the Objective view first, and the Subjective view next, and the Objective-Subjective view to wind up with. What do we know? We know that the loss of the Moonstone, on Thursday morning last, threw her into a state of nervous excitement, from which she has not recovered yet. Do you mean to deny the Objective view, so far? Very well, then—don't interrupt me. Now, being in a state of nervous excitement, how are we to expect that she should behave as she might otherwise have behaved to any of the people about her? Arguing in this way, from within outwards, what do we reach? We reach the Subjective view. I defy you to controvert the Subjective view. Very well, then — what follows? Good Heavens! the

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Objective-Subjective explanation follows, of course! Rachel, properly speaking, is *not* Rachel, but Somebody Else. Do I mind being cruelly treated by Somebody Else? You are unreasonable enough, Betteredge; but you can hardly accuse me of that. Then how does it end? It ends, in spite of your confounded English narrowness and prejudice, in my being perfectly happy and comfortable. Where's the sherry?"

My head was by this time in such a condition, that I was not quite sure whether it was my own head, or Mr. Franklin's. In this deplorable state, I contrived to do, what I take to have been, three Objective things. I got Mr. Franklin his sherry; I retired to my own room; and I solaced myself with the most composing pipe of tobacco I ever remember to have smoked in my life.

Don't suppose, however, that I was quit of Mr. Franklin on such easy terms as these. Drifting again, out of the morning-room into the hall, he found his way to the offices next, smelt my pipe, and was instantly reminded that he had been simple enough to give up smoking for Miss Rachel's sake. In the twinkling of an eye, he burst in on me with his cigar-case, and came out strong on the one everlasting subject, in his neat, witty, unbelieving, French way. "Give me a light, Betteredge. Is it conceivable that a man can have smoked as long as I have, without discovering that there is a complete system for the treatment of women at the bottom of his cigar-case? Follow me, carefully, and I'll prove it in two words. You choose a cigar, you try it, and it disappoints you. What do you do, upon that? You throw it away, and try another. Now observe the application! You choose a woman, you try her, and she breaks your heart. Fool! take a lesson from your cigar-case. Throw her away, and try another!"

I shook my head at that. Wonderfully clever, I dare say, but my own experience was dead against it. "In the time of the late Mrs. Betteredge," I said, "I felt pretty often inclined to try your philosophy, Mr. Franklin. But the law insists on your smoking your cigar, sir, when you have once chosen it." I pointed that observation with a wink. Mr. Franklin burst out laughing—and we were as merry as crickets, until the next new side of his character turned up in due course. So things went on with my young master and me; and so (while the Sergeant and the gardener were wrangling over the roses) we two spent the interval before the news came back from Frizinghall.

The pony chaise returned a good half hour before I had ventured to expect it. My lady had decided to remain, for the present, at her sister's house. The groom brought two letters from his mistress; one addressed to Mr. Franklin, and the other to me.

Mr. Franklin's letter I sent to him in the library—into which refuge his driftings had now taken him for the second time. My own letter, I read in my own room. A cheque, which dropped out when I opened it, informed me (before I had mastered the contents) that Sergeant Cuff's dismissal from the inquiry after the Moonstone was now a settled thing.

I sent to the conservatory to say that I wished to speak to the Sergeant directly. He appeared, with his mind full of the gardener and the dog-rose, declaring that the equal of Mr. Begbie for obstinacy never had existed yet, and never would exist again. I requested him to dismiss such wretched trifling as this from our conversation, and to give his best attention to a really serious matter. Upon that he exerted himself sufficiently to notice the letter in my hand. "Ah!" he said in a weary way, "you have heard from her ladyship. Have I anything to do with it, Mr. Betteredge?"

"You shall judge for yourself, Sergeant." I thereupon read him the letter (with my best emphasis and discretion), in the following words:

"'My good Gabriel,—I request you will inform Sergeant Cuff, that I have performed the promise I made to him; with this result, so far as Rosanna Spearman is concerned. Miss Verinder solemnly declares, that she has never spoken a word in private, to Rosanna, since that unhappy woman first entered my house. They never met, even accidentally, on the night when the Diamond was lost; and no communication of any sort whatever took place between them, from the Thursday morning when the alarm was first raised in the house, to this present Saturday afternoon, when Miss Verinder left us. After telling my daughter, suddenly and in so many words, of Rosanna Spearman's suicide—this is what has come of it.'"

Having reached that point, I looked up, and asked Sergeant Cuff what he thought of the letter, so far?

"I should only offend you if I expressed my opinion," answered the Sergeant. "Go on, Mr. Betteredge," he said, with the most exasperating resignation, "go on."

When I remembered that this man had had the audacity to complain of our gardener's obstinacy, my tongue itched to "go on" in other words than my mistress's. This time, however, my Christianity held firm. I proceeded steadily with her ladyship's letter:

"'Having appealed to Miss Verinder in the manner which the officer thought most desirable, I spoke to her next in the manner which I myself thought most likely to impress her. On two different occasions, before my daughter left my roof, I privately warned her that she was exposing herself to suspicion of the most unendurable and most degrading kind. I have now told her, in the plainest terms, that my apprehensions have been realised.

"'Her answer to this, on her own solemn affirmation, is as plain as words can be. In the first place, she owes no money privately to

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any living creature. In the second place, the Diamond is not now, and never has been, in her possession, since she put it into her cabinet on Wednesday night.

"'The confidence which my daughter has placed in me goes no further than this. She maintains an obstinate silence, when I ask her if she can explain the disappearance of the Diamond. She refuses, with tears, when I appeal to her to speak out for my sake. "The day will come when you will know why I am careless about being suspected, and why I am silent even to *you*. I have done much to make my mother pity me—nothing to make my mother blush for me." Those are my daughter's own words.

"'After what has passed between the officer and me, I think—stranger as he is—that he should be made acquainted with what Miss Verinder has said, as well as you. Read my letter to him, and then place in his hands the cheque which I enclose. In resigning all further claim on his services, I have only to say that I am convinced of his honesty and his intelligence; but I am more firmly persuaded than ever, that the circumstances, in this case, have fatally misled him.'"

There the letter ended. Before presenting the cheque, I asked Sergeant Cuff if he had any remark to make.

"It's no part of my duty, Mr. Betteredge," he answered, "to make remarks on a case, when I have done with it."

I tossed the cheque across the table to him. "Do you believe in *that* part of her ladyship's letter?" I said, indignantly.

The Sergeant looked at the cheque, and lifted his dismal eyebrows in acknowledgment of her ladyship's liberality.

"This is such a generous estimate of the value of my time," he said, "that I feel bound to make some return for it. I'll bear in mind the amount in this cheque, Mr. Betteredge, when the occasion comes round for remembering it."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Her ladyship has smoothed matters over for the present very cleverly," said the Sergeant. "But *this* family scandal is of the sort that bursts up again when you least expect it. We shall have more detective business on our hands, sir, before the Moonstone is many months older."

If those words meant anything, and if the manner in which he spoke them meant anything—it came to this. My mistress's letter had proved, to his mind, that Miss Rachel was hardened enough to resist the strongest appeal that could be addressed to her, and that she had deceived her own mother (good God, under what circumstances!) by a series of abominable lies. How other people, in my place, might have replied to the Sergeant, I don't know. I answered what he had said in these plain terms:

"Sergeant Cuff, I consider your last observation as an insult to my lady and her daughter!"

"Mr. Betteredge, consider it as a warning to yourself, and you will be nearer the mark."

Hot and angry as I was, the infernal confidence with which he gave me that answer closed my lips.

AMONGST RUSSIAN PEASANTRY.

It is growing late in autumn, and I have travelled night and day for the last week with a Russian gentleman returning to his estates to sell the produce of his last harvest. We have been spending a delightful summer together on the Lake of Geneva; and now the pleasant and gracious ladies of his family, who have made the time pass so gaily, have winged their way to Nice for the winter. We are to rejoin them in something less than a month, when my friend has settled his affairs, and shown me something of country life in Russia. We have scarcely quitted the railroad when this life begins. A light open carriage waits for us at the station, together with a cart for our luggage: and the last we see of civilisation is a board before a tea-shop, on which is coarsely painted "Various of Rhums," signifying that rum of different qualities is to be bought there; though why the announcement is made in English is not so clear.

It is soon easy to see we are in Russia. Nearly every person in decent clothes wears a uniform. The uniform appears, indeed, chiefly, if not altogether, in the buttons; but it is unmistakable. There is also a certain air of restraint—a mingled look of fear and watchfulness—about people, which is especially Russian. The man who rides in the post-cart with our luggage is naturally in uniform, because he is a post-office clerk, and has been given to us by the local director of that establishment as a concession to the rank and local influence of my companion, who has to pay handsomely for the honour notwithstanding. It is cheap, however, at any price; for no sooner are that clerk's buttons visible at any post-house on the road than all the resources of the establishment are put in force to get us horses on as quickly as possible. At whatever hour of the day or night we may gallop up, the clerk uses some irresistible "open Sesame," and lights soon begin to flash, and a whole village is astir, although five minutes previously it was sunk in the very depths of silence and sleep. We can get nothing to eat anywhere, but now and then our servant, a nimble Pole (count, of course), brings us a tumbler of hot fragrant tea, the colour of amber, made from a store he carries with him. Hot water is to be had at all times in the post stations—nothing more. There is no temptation to remain for rest or refreshment at any of them. They are all kept by dirty, surly peasants, and consist of an uncarpeted, whitewashed, oblong hole on the ground-floor, with a greasy sofa, two chairs, a slimy table, and a paralytic looking-glass. This

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is the regulation furniture as fixed by law, and it all reeks alike of bad tobacco smoke. Nobody ever seems to go to bed or to get up at the post-houses. The boors who appear to live there are found rolled up and drowsy in the doorways and passages at noon-day; just as they are found rolled up and drowsy in the same places at midnight. Some of them look like ferrets; some like wolf-dogs. The children look like ferrets, the men and women like wolf-dogs. Nearly all have diseased eyes. The eyes are small and dull, surrounded by a bright, inflamed rim of scarlet. Deformity, scrofula, even leprosy, are common in the villages. The people are fearfully lean; but they do not seem to be hungry. They look apathetic, inclined for sleep and warmth. They wrap themselves up in coarse undressed skins, and huddle near the stoves. Nothing but kicks and rough usage will rouse them. When stirred up they rise without a word, and slouch off to the stables. There, if not followed and rated roundly by the post-office clerk, they try to go to sleep again; and will often hide themselves, though sure of a beating and loud words for so doing. While we are changing horses in the dark hours, other peasants come slinking towards us through the gloom, so that we have quite a crowd round us before we start—a silent, morose, lumpish crowd, with very little that is human about them indeed.

So we ceaselessly travel for days through an unlovely country of blasted steppe, without a tree, a flowèr, or a blade of grass for miles and hundreds of miles. The villages are mere mud hovels partly under ground. Most of the cottages have but one room; few are weather tight. The bleak wind coming from the northern snow-fields makes itself felt cruelly, and pierces through all our wraps and pelisses; cutting like a knife towards sunrise and just after sunset, when the air seems chilliest. There are no objects of interest on the road. No old castles hallowed by historic memories, and haunted by legendary guests. There are no monuments of art. No ancient temples, no famous battle grounds. All is barren and desert. The scenery is everywhere without beauty or interest. There is no life in it. No game, no singing birds. The evening closes in without a voice, silently, drearily. There is no cover for the partridge, no food for the rabbit and the hare, no water for wild-fowl.

One day towards noon we come in sight of a town. It is formed of a long wide street with whitewashed houses on each side, a whitewashed church with a copper top, and some windmills on a height. People in red cotton dresses are moving lazily about. There are some shops. They sell boots all the same size and shape, knee boots, waistbands, and wooden bowls and platters gilt, stained, and varnished very prettily; also copper tea-urns, and some sham Manchester goods made in Germany. In the midst of the street rises a whitewashed palace, something between a barrack, a hospital, and a Gothic castle. That is the house of my friend.

A crowd of peasants are waiting for us; and as the carriage stops there is a faint cheer, and a salute of cannon is fired somewhere. Three venerable-looking old men, in cloth bedgowns fastened with sashes at the waist, approach, fall on their knees, and kiss the boots of my friend. He is a sober, respectable little man; but he takes their homage quite coolly, and says a few words to them in a good-natured tone without motioning them to rise. He calls them his "little fathers." They are the chiefs and elders of the peasant community which a few years ago belonged to him, and might have been sold for money. Now all this slavery is over, but many of the old traditions are still kept up. Some of the men have got a tray covered over with a napkin of muslin embroidered and fringed with gold. They draw near, and, uncovering their burden, present their lord with bread and salt. Then he makes them a speech. The spokesman of the community replies. They all stand in a semicircle, bare headed, looking at nothing. There is not the faintest trace of expression on their faces. They are not a comely nor even a healthy set of men, although my friend's estate is one of the most prosperous in Russia. He is a kind landlord; a worthy and liberal man. His peasants grow rich. Still he has not reigned above twenty years; and the old characteristic type of the Russian peasant will take longer than this to wear out. When the talking is done they disperse silently. Yet in that brief talk my friend has given away about a thousand houses in freehold to his tenantry; and he mentions this fact to me very simply at breakfast about an hour afterwards. I tell him I hardly think an English landlord would have been so liberal, and that if, as we hear whispered, representative institutions are soon to be established in Russia, he may find that he has lost so many votes.

"We have not come to that yet," replied my friend, "and what Russian landlords have most to fear just now is a general emigration from their estates. Our country is so thinly peopled that work in towns is plentiful and well paid. Our peasants have found this out, and have little taste for agricultural labour, which is toilsome and scantily remunerated. Thus many of my neighbours' lands are quite deserted, and yield no income at all. One friend of mine, whose property, worked by serf labour, produced annually about ten thousand pounds a year English money, now does not yield him more than five hundred pounds. The sale of the confiscated estates in Poland at nominal prices has also helped to depopulate our rural districts. Most of these lands have been bought by German colonists, who offer great inducements to our farm labourers to join them. We cannot compete with them successfully, because the Polish soil is not only more fertile than ours, but they have markets for their produce nearer. There is but one inducement which can be offered our peasantry to stay with their old masters; it is to give them their houses. They

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have a superstitious reverence for them, which it is possible to turn to very good account. I have added also to my gift little plots of ground for gardens, and have told my agent to establish annual prizes for the best flowers grown in them. My wife tried all this years ago, but nothing came of it. When we were first married we attempted for some years to reside here, but it was impossible. My wife and children grew sick with weariness and privation. I was obliged to take them abroad, where we have lived ever since. I know that I lose at least two-thirds of my income by continuing an absentee; but what am I to do? In Russia there are no educational establishments worthy of the name. No provincial society, no amusement, no culture. Nothing but uniforms and their wearers everywhere. There is not a skilled physician at this moment, or a practised surgeon within three hundred miles of us. There is not a good library, or an accomplished gentleman any nearer. To live here would be to rot."

So far my friend, as we sat opposite each other sipping some excellent home-made wine like Burgundy, but with a curious flavour of violets in it. Meantime the antechamber had filled with a crowd of suitors; and his agent came to give us a short preliminary summary of their wants and wishes. The agent was a retired colonel in the army. He still wore his uniform, and though his manner was ostentatiously cringing and humble, he was understood to make some fifty thousand roubles, or say seven thousand pounds yearly, by indirect means out of the estate. "He is a great rogue," said my friend in English, as he entered, "but if I send him away I shall only get a greater." So the colonel joined us. He had a flat head, gooseberry eyes, a wide thin mouth, a prominent chin, and a jerky manner. When he spoke to my friend, he saluted by putting the back of his right hand against the peak of his cap and bringing his heels together with a smart rap. He is not a sympathetic gentleman at all, though so marvellously polite, and the thin varnish of civilisation over his behaviour seems to render it more repulsive than it would be if more natural and savage. He has a long list of requests and petitions, and tries to show the value of his services in having kept off troubles of so pressing a nature from pursuing his employer abroad. New barns are the first thing required. The rats in the old ones are so numerous that they eat up half the corn stored up before it can be sold. One of the barns, too, the best of them, has been recently burnt. The peasants will no longer keep so sharp a watch as they did in the old time of serfdom, and incendiary fires have been very numerous of late. The Polish malcontents are suspected, but nothing can be proved for certain. A steam plough must also be bought, and the agent has already given orders for one through a banker at Taganrog. It will cost a great deal of money, but the plough bought two years ago is quite spoiled, and hand labour is not to be had for love or money. The peasants when required to work assemble in the court-yard before the palace, and try to drive a hard bargain. Unless their demands are at once complied with they use threatening words, and nothing can be done with them. The Artesian wells, sunk by order of the German geologist, have all proved failures, and the cost has absorbed most of the money in the agent's hands. Then the locusts destroyed all the maize — nine thousand acres of Indian corn all devoured by them. The live stock sent from abroad, the English cows and pigs, the Spanish merino sheep, and the Austrian poultry have not thriven. The cold has killed most of them and the breeds have become mixed. Only some of the sheep remain of the pure breed imported. The trees, too, transplanted from a distant forest to the garden near the palace, have withered. Nothing has prospered but some rye-grass.

This is uncomfortable news, but the colonel deals it out very glibly, as if he was saying a lesson learned off by heart. When he has finished speaking the peasants are admitted. I notice the agent seizes this opportunity to take a glass of wine and light his cigarette, to show that he is on easy and familiar terms with his employer. The spokesman of the country people then advances and goes down on his knees again, all those behind him crossing themselves. When he rises he speaks for a considerable time in a low monotonous voice. At the conclusion of his harangue he kneels down again and kisses the feet of his landlord. The peasants have come to ask for a new church. They have subscribed a considerable sum among themselves, and they now expect to have the necessary amount completed. When their request is granted they go away crossing themselves and uttering muttered thanks. Then the business of the day is over.

There are no neighbours; no doctor, lawyer, nor scholarly priest. All the houses round for a day's journey are hovels; their inhabitants boors. There is a colonel of Cossacks and some officers of his regiment quartered about; but they are drunken quarrelsome fellows, with whom it is quite impossible to hold social intercourse. All we can do is to walk over the estate. There is neither shooting, fishing, nor saddle-horses. But I am promised a wolf hunt.

Meantime we start for our ramble over the home farm. There is no dairy, not a pint of milk nor a drop of cream, nor a pound of butter, nor a fresh egg. There are some lean oxen about, and thousands of sheep. The men and women on the farm are both dressed alike in the same untanned sheepskins and knee boots. There is no difference in their costume, save that the men wear a black brimless felt hat and the women tie their heads up with handkerchiefs. If we meet any man or woman alone there is the customary salutation on the knees; but I observe that if two or three peasants are together they pass us without notice. On returning home we find a deputation of three

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priests come for money. They are all of the peasant class, without education or refinement. They are very humble in the presence of the great man, who is rather brusque and impatient with them; but they are persistent and they get what they came for, though my friend begins to wince and look grave at the demands made on him. We dine quite alone, no guest or civilised being within hail anywhere; and by-and-by an old woman, who was my friend's nurse, comes in with a bottle of some home-made medicine, for the making of which she is famous. We have some talk with her, and she takes away a present and some kind words. Towards nine o'clock we go to bed tired out, weary with travel, dazed by the wind.

The next morning I find the colonel's brother, who is one of his sub-agents on another part of the estate, waiting for me in a britzka; and we are soon galloping through the brisk morning air towards the quarters of the wolves. Russian gentlemen have little taste for sport, and my friend remains at home to settle accounts with his agent. Nevertheless, great preparations have been made to ensure us success. All the country side are out; perhaps a hundred beaters with sticks, and a score of yeomen on horseback with guns. We have met on the borders of a large forest. Here and there are beehives about; and the sale of honey appears a considerable branch of local trade. The beaters are soon lost in the wood, and the sportsmen are posted at convenient places to wait for the game. We hear the cries and shouts of the country people in the distance, but hour after hour passes away and no wolves appear. Just as I am growing drowsy, however, and have almost ceased to think of them at all, a large grey wolf comes through the wood at a slouching trot, stops suddenly on the borders of a ditch, and looks across at me. I have time to take up my gun leisurely enough and fire. When the smoke has cleared away the wolf has disappeared. It was almost impossible, however, to have missed him, so we go in pursuit and find the beast a few yards off, hidden in some brushwood, but quite dead. Though we wait many hours after this, some hundred men besides horses and servants, we see no more wolves nor any other living thing, but a single wild cat; and so when the evening comes on we scamper homewards again. It seems a poor day's sport for so many people; but although the peasantry cannot be induced to work, they are always glad of any excuse for throwing away their time; and appear quite content to have stood about in the wind all day doing nothing. For my own part I am rather proud of having shot my first wolf, and call out rather excitedly to my friend to come and look at it. As he does not answer I go into the house to search for him, and find him enjoying the nap of solitude and boredom. He, too, is pleased by my marksmanship, and wakes up briskly to witness its result. I am certainly not gone five minutes; but when I return to the britska, where I left my game, it is stolen. No wonder: the skin, observes my friend briefly, is worth about three roubles.

DAVID GARRICK.

Early in 1716, Peter Garrick, a lieutenant of dragoons, serving in Colonel James Tyrrel's regiment, came on recruiting service to Hereford. He put up at the Angel Inn, an old timber-framed house (burned down a hundred years ago), where, on the 19th of February, in this same year of 1716, his wife gave birth to a son—their third child—known afterwards to fame as David Garrick, the actor.

This future Roscius was not altogether an Englishman. His grandfather, the founder of the family so far as England was concerned, was originally De la Garrigue, a Huguenot of Bordeaux, forced to fly from France in 1685, to escape the storm then sweeping over the reformed church; Madame de la Garrigue, or Garric, following some months later, hid in the hold of a small fourteen-ton skiff, belonging to one Peter Cook, of Guernsey. In that piteous plight she remained a month, tossed about in heavy gales and fearful tempests, in peril of her life by shipwreck on the one hand, or by ecclesiastical zeal on the other, should she fall into the hands of the authorities. It was not until a year and a half after their own flight that they received their little son Peter, the future lieutenant of dragoons, and our David's father; the persecution of the moment extending even to babes and sucklings, on the principle of crushing the eggs of the cockatrice betimes. In fulness of time Peter made a love-match; about as imprudent as love-matches generally are. He married Arabella, the daughter of a certain Reverend Mr. Clough, a vicar-choral of Lichfield, and herself the daughter of an Irish mother; and thus in little David's veins were mingled the three streams of French, Irish, and English blood, affording good tracking-ground to the ethnologist, and first-rate elements for dramatic talent and steady success.

That dramatic talent soon began to show itself; for, when only eleven years of age, David enrolled a small company of his own, drilling them carefully, and finally giving, "in the large room," Farquhar's Recruiting Officer, keeping the part of Sergeant Kite for himself. He gave that of the Chambermaid to one of his sisters. Soon after this first amateur performance David was sent off to an uncle, a wine-merchant in Lisbon, where he remained but a short time; the details of a clerk's duties suiting ill with one whom nothing short of the excitement and vivacity of the stage would have satisfied. It was well for him and his, and all of us, that he disliked the wine trade, and came back to England. Had he been less restless and determined, "brands" and "vintages" would have cost the world dear. To his family his return was an immense boon; for in 1731, Peter, now Captain Garrick, went off to Gibraltar, leaving

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his wife nearly broken-hearted for his loss, ill, poor, and despairing, but leaving also behind him "Little Davie," or, as Mr. Fitzgerald describes him, "a useful comforter—a boy of surprising sense and spirit—the most zealous and affectionate of children—who seemed now to take the whole responsibility of the family on his childish shoulders with a tact and ardour surprising in one who was barely sixteen." He wrote to his father by every mail, and these letters are among the most charming parts of Mr. Fitzgerald's book.*

His acknowledgment of the captain's first letter, announcing his safe arrival, is very characteristic in its enthusiastic affection. "It is not to be expressed," he says, "the joy the family was in at the receipt of dear papa's letter. Mamma was in very good spirits two or three days after she received your letter, but now begins to grow moloncolly, and has little ugly fainting fits. My mamma," he goes on, "received the thirty pounds you was so good as to send. She paid ten pounds to Mr. Rider, one year's rent, and ten pounds to the baker; and if you can spare her a little more, or tell her you will, she is in hopes of paying all your debts, that you may have nothing to fret you when you come home." Another time he writes that "my mamma has cleared off all the debts" save the irrepressible butcher, who had received a sop, and would wait for the remainder; then he tells "dear papa" that he has been presented with a pair of silver breeches-buckles, and that he hears "velvet is very cheap at Gibraltar. Amen, and so be it." Then, his sisters "Lenny and Jenny, with the greatest duty and obedience, request a small matter to purchase their head-ornaments;" for how otherwise are people to distinguish them from the vulgar madams? Again, "my mamma is very weak, attended with a lowness of spirits, which compelled her to drink wine, which gives a great deal of uneasiness upon two accounts, as it goes against her inclination and pockett." Sometimes they are all very "moloncolly;" and sometimes he tells the absent one of all the fine doings in the town; then he goes off into loving praise of a certain miniature, "one piece of Le Grout" which he values above all the pieces of Zeuxis, and of which he would sooner have one glance than look a whole day at the finest picture in the world. "It is the figure of a gentleman, and I suppose military, by his dress," he says. "I think Le Grout told me his name was one Captain Peter Garrick; perhaps, as you are in the army, you may know him. He is pretty, and, I believe, not very tall."

But all these loving messages could not soften the hard fact of absence. Time dragged wearily on, and it was not until 1736 that the "pretty" captain managed to exchange his exile at Gibraltar, for home, wife, and children once more at Lichfield. The next year he died, leaving over two thousand pounds among his children, but giving to David only the traditionary shilling. This, as Mr. Fitzgerald says, was not on account of any estrangement or displeasure with the loving boy, but because his uncle, the Lisbon wine-merchant, with whom David would not stay, had put him down in his will for a legacy of a thousand pounds, and so the father thought him sufficiently provided for without his help.

This death took place only a month after David's enrolment as a student at Lincoln's Inn; but about the same time, too, died the wine-merchant, whereby the youth came in for his legacy at once, and so was as well off as if his father had lived. His first act, now that he was his own master, was to put himself under the tuition of the Reverend Mr. Colson, of Rochester, supposed to be the Gelidus of the Rambler; which shows that his ambition was of the right kind, and that he knew the difference between reality and sham. After a time he set up a wine business, in partnership with his brother Peter—Peter living at Lichfield, and looking after the interests of the firm, among "the most sober decent people in England, the most orthodox, the genteelest, in proportion to their wealth, and who spoke the purest English," as Johnson said of the Lichfieldites; while David represented the same interests in London, dating from Durham-yard, where he had his vaults and offices. Even then it was said that they contrived to form a sort of theatrical connexion, most of the coffee-houses about the theatres giving them their custom. Mr. Cooke once saw a business receipt of the firm's, to a Mr. Robinson, of the Strand, close by, who had given an order for two dozen of red port, at eighteen shillings a dozen. It was signed, "For self and Co., October, 1739, D. Garrick." When the actor was rich and flourishing, Foote was often heard to whisper that he remembered Garrick in Durham-yard, with three quarts of vinegar in the cellar, calling himself a wine-merchant.

One of David's most intimate friends at this time was an Irish actor of rough humour and ability, belonging to Drury Lane, a good fives player, and full of promise in his profession. He was struggling hard to get rid of a very "pronounced" brogue, and had already so far anglicised himself as to change his uncouth name of M'Laughlin into Mechlin, and later, Macklin. He was quarrelsome and overbearing, full of genius; but as Garrick was not a man who would quarrel with any one—indeed, one might almost apply to him the coarse expression of an American paper, "that the boots were not made which could kick him into a fight"—the two got on very well together, and for some five or six years were scarcely a day out of each other's company. Later, they quarrelled, as was, perhaps, only the natural reaction from such an excessive intimacy. Dr. Barrowby was also Garrick's friend in those days, as were Johnson, Hogarth, Chancellor Hoadley, and others of the greater, with some of the minor, notabilities. But his heart lay

* The Life of David Garrick, by Percy Fitzgerald, M.A.

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with the theatre — neither with business nor with literature; and whenever he had an opportunity, he let his inclinations assert themselves. After a time they developed in the old, old way of men and heroes, whatever the special professional bent; and he fell in love, as might have been expected. His charmer, to use the cant word of his day, was the new Irish actress, Margaret, or, as she was generally called, Peg Woffington—the dashing Sir Harry Wildair of the period. And she fell in love with him in return, much to the disgust of another aspirant, Sir Hanbury Williams, who, as the manner then was, besieged her heart by verse, writing the gay and popular song, "Lovely Peggy," as his claim to her gratitude and consideration.

With such proclivities and such associations the end of Garrick's career as a wine-merchant was certain. In 1741, the little theatre in Goodman's Fields brought out a small pantomime, called Harlequin Student, with Yates as Harlequin. One night poor Harlequin was too ill to appear—failing just as the piece was beginning; and "the gay and sprightly young wine-merchant secretly agreed with the manager that he should take his place." The world did not know of the exchange at the time, and it was only long after that it became public; but this was literally his first appearance, unimportant as were both occasion and result.

Soon after this, Giffard and Dunstall went with a troupe to Ipswich. Among the actors was a débutant of the name of Lyddal, who made his first appearance as Aboan, the black lieutenant of Oroonoko. He was received very warmly, the Ipswich public recognising stuff of rather uncommon quality in the beginner. After Aboan he played Chamont in the Orphan; passing on to other characters as he gained confidence and footing; soon taking Mrs. Woffington's own particular character of Sir Harry Wildair, as much her creation at that time as Lord Dundreary is Mr. Sothern's in the present day. He made a hit, his success being due, perhaps, to the rattling, dashing part itself; for it was afterwards counted as one of his failures; and then, flushed with his provincial triumphs, Lyddal applied for an engagement to Rich and Fleetwood, the managers of the two greater houses. His offer was declined. Ipswich credentials were all very well, but Ipswich prestige would not carry the metropolis; and "a small, well-made young man, of genteel appearance, seemed scarcely the stuff for a tragedian of the first class." Still he was resolved. Genius such as his could not, indeed, be gainsaid. Lyddal was Garrick, and Garrick had to feign a little before his solemn brother Peter. The struggle between family affection and strong personal inclination threw him into deep dejection of spirits, and finally brought on an illness. But he made his preparations all the same, and went on his appointed way securely, if not serenely.

Suddenly, in the year 1741, on a certain morning in October, Mr. Peter Garrick received two letters—one from Dr. Swinfen, a family friend and physician, who knew and attended the Johnson and Garrick families; the other from his brother, Mr. David Garrick. "Both were to the same effect, and both contained the fatal piece of news, broken to the shocked Peter with every sort of excuse and appeal to brotherly affection and personal interest. The step had been taken, 'the Rubicon crossed;' on the night before (October 19th), Mr. David Garrick had appeared before a London audience, at Goodman's Fields Theatre, with the most astounding success." He came out as "crook-back'd Richard," and, as Mr. Swinfen testifies to his friend Mr. Peter Garrick, "with the most general applause." There was no question now as to the future, and the world had gained what the wine trade had lost.

As yet, though, Garrick played without his name—only as "a gentleman who never appeared on any stage"—which was more telling theatrically than correct, with Harlequin and the black lieutenant of Oroonoco at Ipswich in the background; but he made quite as much sensation, anonymous, as if he had had one of the best-known patronymics in the world. On the 2nd of November, Pope, though he was then sickly and failing, and had long ago given up theatres, came to see the new actor. He said of him, "That young man never had his equal, and will never have a rival;" and came again and again to see him, young, anonymous as he was. On the 2nd of December, the night of his benefit, the veil was raised, and the town learnt the name of its latest wonder. Mr. Garrick, it was announced, the gentleman who had played King Richard, would now appear in the Fair Penitent, which was to be given gratis; for Goodman's Fields Theatre had no licence for acting plays, and therefore could take no money, save for the concert which was the ostensible entertainment. The reality, the play, which was performed between the two parts of the concert, was advertised as gratis, and thus, by a transparent fiction, escaped the stringency of the well-known Licensing Act. For this benefit the prices were raised a shilling, the pit and boxes being four shillings—equal to about seven-and-sixpence of our time—while the gallery was one-and-sixpence. The servants were required to be in their mistresses' places by three o'clock, to keep them till the fine ladies themselves came at six or seven. All this testified to the furore which the young actor had created.

Newton, the future bishop, at present only tutor in Lord Carpenter's family, was one of Garrick's fast friends and staunch admirers. The great Mrs. Porter, the retired actress, said "The youth was a born actor, and knew more at his first appearance than others after twenty years' training." Ladies of quality made up parties to see this "neat and genteel" young man, playing at a small theatre miles away from every fashionable place of resort; and then envy and detraction — inevitable shadows of success—followed close upon the heels of his

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fame. Old Cibber was the most obstinate in refusing to recognise his merit. One night Garrick had been playing Fribble. "You should see him," said Cibber to a certain lord. "He is the completest little doll of a figure—the prettiest little figure." "But in other characters," said the lord, "has he not great merit?" He did not answer for a moment; then, suddenly, "What an admirable Fribble!—such mimicking, ambling, fidgeting! Well, he *must* be a clever fellow to write up to his own character so excellently as he has done in this part." Later, when Fleetwood, in the green-room, asked Cibber when they were to have another comedy from him, "From me!" cried the old man. "But who would take the characters?" "Well, sir," was the answer, "there's Garrick, Macklin, Clive, Pritchard." "Oh yes," said Cibber, "I know that list very well; but then, my dear fellow," he said, taking a pinch of snuff very deliberately, "*where the devil are your actors?*" Quin was neither disloyal nor bitter. "If this young fellow be right, then we have been all wrong," he said, truly enough with reference to his own mouthing style. He called Garrick "the Whitfield of the stage;" which was in no wise a disrespectful manner of epitomising his functions as reformer, innovator, and unloosener of conventional bandages. Yet no one, perhaps, suffered more in artistic repute by this revolution than did Quin himself, which made his present moderation and future friendship specially honourable.

Seven months' hard work and brilliant triumph had neither fatigued nor sated Garrick; and his season was no sooner over in Goodman's Fields than he set off with Mrs. Woffington and Signora Barberini, the dancer, to try the temper of the Irish. If his success had been great in London, in Dublin it was sublime. His name became a cant phrase. "As gay as Garrick;" "That's your Garrick;" and an epidemic which broke out about this time, and which they pretended arose from the overcrowded houses in Smock-alley, was long remembered as the Garrick fever. The city was full of "persons of quality;" and they all crowded to see him. The lords justices, the primate, the lord chancellor, and the speaker went in great state to see his Busy Body; and it was in Dublin, at this time, that the name of Roscius was first given to him. Henceforth his footing was secure, and his life was now one long series of prosperities; at times, perhaps, a little checked and broken, but always steady in the main result—always advancing, always prosperous.

In 1747, Garrick saw his future wife—the Violette, as she was called—the lady-dancer, about whose birth and belongings there was always a mystery, and whose journey to England was a romance in itself; for she came over from Vienna, disguised as a page, in company with two Hanoverian gentlemen—or what passed as a Hanoverian baron and his suite. Among the party on board was the handsome, lively, and not too strait-laced Dr. Carlyle, of Inverness, then a gay young Scottish student returning from a Dutch university, who detected the woman through the disguise. She was the reputed daughter of John Veigel, a respectable citizen of Vienna; and it was said that it was Maria Theresa herself who made her change her name from Veigel—a patois corruption of Veilchen, a violet—into the prettier French name corresponding. She had better friends, though, and more influential patrons in Vienna than seemed to belong, of right, to a mere citizen's daughter, even though she had a pretty face and a genius for dancing; but no one ever got to the heart of the secret, or, if any one did, it was never told. She brought letters of introduction to the Earl of Burlington and his family, and they took her up with extraordinary warmth and affection. Indeed, it was whispered about that she was nearer of kin to the earl than my lady the countess knew of when she first protected her; but the Violette herself, when asked directly about her forbears, denied that she came from Burlington House, by the right hand or by the left, though she said that she was of "noble birth"—as, indeed, seemed very likely, by the manner in which she was treated. With this Watteau-like beauty with "the small round face, ripe lips, and cloud of turquoise-coloured drapery floating about her," as represented in a dainty little miniature by Petitot, young Mr. Garrick, the play-actor, fell in love. By all accounts, she had fallen in love with him first, from seeing him on the stage in one of his favourite characters, when she fell sick of that mysterious malady which sometimes attacks the young. No one knew what ailed the pretty creature, till a doctor, with brains and insight, found out the cause, and told Lady Burlington what was amiss. The countess had designed a very different kind of marriage for her protégée, and would not hear of the new manager of Drury Lane, for all his money and talent. She forbade their meeting, and was so strenuously opposed to the whole thing that the lover was obliged to disguise himself as a woman for the purpose of conveying a letter to the Violette, which else would never have been allowed to reach her. Time and love, however, conquer most things, and the engagement was at last sanctioned. On the 25th of May, 1749, a premature announcement in the paper set forth the marriage of "Mr. Garrick, the comedian, to Mademoiselle Violette, the dancer;" but when the event actually took place, as it did on the 22nd of June following, it was "David Garrick, Esq., to Mademoiselle Eva Maria Violette," with no profession specified on either side. After the names, came the sum of ten thousand pounds, announced (as was the newspaper fashion then) as the bride's fortune; of which the Burlingtons gave six, and Garrick himself four.

Garrick's feet were now securely set on the great ladder of success, and his whole after-life was one series of advances. Enemies, of course, he had—what successful man has not?—and detractors by the score. Foote was one who

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always plucked at him; "for you know he hates me," said Garrick. Junius, offended by an indiscretion, threatened him with the statute still in force, which would treat him as a vagabond, and deal with him as a rogue. Kenrick libelled him; actresses struck work, pouted, rebelled, and created schisms in the green-room and on the stage; all sorts of annoying little shadows fell darkling upon the edges of his glory, but still the central light remained the same, and even increased as time went on. He had some ingratitude to contend with, as of course; and among those who repaid favours with frowns was the intemperate and unscrupulous Arthur Murphy. Rogers used to tell one unvarying anecdote about Murphy, which some of our readers may have heard at first hand. "Mr. Murphy, sir, you knew Mr. Garrick?"—"Yes, sir, I did; and no man better."—"Well, sir, what did you think of his acting?"—After a pause, "Well, sir, *off* the stage he was a mean sneaking little fellow; but *on* the stage"—throwing up his hands and eyes—"oh my great God!" "This was the invariable formula," adds Mr. Fitzgerald: "nothing less general could be obtained from him."

If he had enemies, however, he sometimes deserved them, for he often committed follies, and more than one fault to help. For though Mr. Fitzgerald amiably tries to show him as heroic throughout, the general voice of contemporary history is too loud, and its verdict too uniform, to be easily silenced or upset. What this latest biographer insists on as lawful thrift does indeed seem to have been rank parsimony; what he says was sweetness of temper reads marvellously like meanness of spirit; while the justice and placidity he praises so constantly look more like that universal cringe which will not see an insult, even when grossly evident, and which dreads nothing so much as to offend. But, saint or sinner, he did good work in the world so far as his own profession went; he did more to raise the stage than any man who had then lived, and his very pride in always insisting on his gentlehood was a help to the "vagabonds" he represented. We owe it primarily to Garrick that the stage has come to be looked on as a profession like any other profession; that actors and actresses are allowed to be gentlefolks, although actors and actresses; that purity of living and the footlights can go together; and that Bohemianism and vagabondism and riot and rascality, are not necessarily the adjuncts of a calling which has included some of the noblest women and most honourable men among its followers.

Garrick took his leave of the stage on June the 10th, 1776. He played Don Felix, in The Wonder, and had such a leave-taking as no actor ever had before, and none since. It was like the parting of lovers when he said adieu to his old friends in pit and gallery, and was almost as pathetic. He did not live long after this uprooting—not more than two years and a half; dying of a painful malady on the 20th of January, 1779. His savings amounted to nearly a hundred thousand pounds; but he did not leave the whole to his wife. She had a good provision; his relations were also thought of, though not one personal friend. She had the two houses at Hampton and the house at the Adelphi. At Hampton, which she allowed to get into sad disrepair, she was often visited by Queen Charlotte and the king. The queen found her once peeling onions, and took a knife and began to peel onions with her. She was generally surrounded by her "hundred head of nieces," as Miss Berry called them, and lived in excellent preservation till October the 16th, 1822, when she died without a sigh, quite quietly and quite suddenly, as she was contemplating her dresses laid out for her to choose from for that night's wearing. She was going to see Drury Lane, newly decorated by Elliston, and perhaps the little flutter of the anticipation was too much for her.

A DISCREET REPORT.

"There is," writes Dr. Jonathan Swift, "no talent so useful towards rising in the world, or which puts men more out of the power of fortune, than that quality generally possessed by the dullest sort of men, and in common speech called 'discretion;' a species of lower prudence, by the assistance of which people of the meanest sort of intellects pass through the world in great tranquillity, neither giving nor taking offence." A report by the medical officer of the Poor Law Board upon forty-eight provincial workhouses in England and Wales, is redolent of this useful quality. In every one of its hundred and fifty-seven pages, its author, Dr. Edward Smith, skates upon thin ice with a dexterity which speaks volumes for his official training; and, with his colleague or chief, Mr. H. Fleming, invites appreciative praise. This latter gentleman, as secretary of the Poor Law Board, framed the official instructions to Dr. Smith in a letter, which is a model of "lower prudence." The object being to combine a show of candour with a reality of concealment, these sixteen ounces of blue book are worth, not the paltry one-and-eightpence charged for them, but their weight in gold.

First, as to their origin. The country had been visited with one of those unpleasant spasms of conscientiousness which are the bane of faulty systems. The starving, the poisoning, the torturing, and the killing of workhouse inmates had been exposed in parliament and by the press. Men had asked angrily who was responsible? and The Department had, in reply, issued a dignified protest against sensationalism. But this did not wholly satisfy the country. The several districts in which barbarism had been proved were known to be controlled nominally by the inspectors of the Poor Law Board, and a dim notion took possession of the public mind that the duties of these gentlemen, and of the authorities over them, might, on the whole, be more efficiently performed. Some active minds went so far as to think that skilled knowledge

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might be useful in the controlling and managing of state hospitals. "Deficiency of the medical element," was the cry when scandals became frequent, and Dr. Smith was appointed, first, a poor-law inspector, eventually, "medical officer" and adviser-in-chief. But as aged, infirm, and sick paupers continued to be sacrificed to the false god, System, the public were unreasonable enough to imagine that even a change in official designation did not meet the whole difficulties of the case. Questions were put in the House of Commons, and the newspapers teemed with inculpatory statements concerning paupers who maliciously refused to live; so the department made another laborious effort. The shameful facts, familiar to every man and woman in England who could read or talk, were not known "officially" at Whitehall. It was determined to despatch Dr. Edward Smith on a voyage of discovery through the poor-law districts of the kingdom, and to so learn how matters really stood. Six workhouses were to be visited in each district; and in order that the investigation should be searching, and impartial, the people whose characters were chiefly at stake were actually asked how much and how little of their deficiencies they wished to disclose. Mr. Secretary Gathorne Hardy, was the president of the Poor Law Board when these astounding instructions were given, and the Report under consideration may therefore be taken as a guide to the form of composition of which Mr. Hardy approves.

Upon the 16th of August, 1866, Mr. H. Fleming writes Dr. Edward Smith an official letter that the president being dissatisfied with the treatment of the sick in country workhouses, "he requests you, in conjunction with"—not some impartial witness, not a skilled authority, not even an unbiassed official, but "*the inspector of the district*, to visit some five or six workhouses in each district, and to report upon the sufficiency of the existing arrangements." Then comes a sentence which is either a model of discretion, or, as a public document presented to the House of Commons, the climax of audacity. "The Board do not think it necessary to particularise the workhouses in each district which you should visit, *as they think the selection of the workhouses will be best made in consultation between you and the inspector of the district*."

On what principle in law are men before the bar of justice allowed to dictate to judge and jury the offences for which they will be tried? Was it innocently thought that these negligent inspectors would sacrifice themselves for past wrong-doing, and call Dr. Smith's attention to the most flagrant instances of workhouse neglect and mismanagement? In other words no pains were spared to make his inspection an empty form. The ten subjects discussed are less important than those to be avoided.

1. Classes of sick cases.
2. Officers in charge.
3. Site of the workhouse, and arrangements for exercise.
4. Character and construction of wards.
5. Separate sick wards and detached sick wards.
6. Sanitary appliances, as cleaning water-closets, baths, lavatories, and kitchens.
7. Nurses' apartments.
8. Furniture for the wards.
9. Medical appliances.
10. Dietary, cooking, and distribution of food.

Let us ask whether Dr. Smith examined the workhouse medical officer's report-book, and, if so, why the significant information it affords was not incorporated in his statement? whether the drugs furnished to the sick were inspected, and with what result? why no return is given of the number of personal attendances made by the medical officers of each workhouse, and the circumstances under which ill-informed or uninformed attendants or pupils are sent in their masters' stead? and, lastly, why our inspector of inspectors passes over in comparative silence such vital points as water-supply, drainage, and main-sewer arrangements? These are surely matters within the province of a medical adviser; and their omission suggests unpleasantly that there are drawbacks as well as advantages in leaving the inspection of professional men in purely professional hands. The habit of herding together patients suffering from different complaints, which prevails in many parish establishments, might have fairly been made a subject for discussion. Dr. Smith only tells us that in the majority of instances classification would involve "placing a sick person in a room alone," and that "to a case of consumption likely to live for many months this would be intolerable, and would render the workhouse ward little better than a prison." This does not meet the question. Is it not the case that in some rural workhouses asthmatical and consumptive cases are warded side by side with noisy imbeciles; and would our medical adviser sanction any such possibility save in workhouse wards? In comparing the relative advantages of a workhouse and a poor man's house in time of illness, our teacher admits rather unnecessarily that a poor man's "wife, *with all her defects*, has often the great advantage of affection and devotion." So that we have it on official authority that paupers are really men and women.

But when he touches the question of nursing, Dr. Smith's reticence becomes amazing. In the face of recent disclosures, and with the alleged object of his report in view, the following placid statement will be read with wonder: "The feeling is now very general throughout the country that paid nurses should be appointed to the care of the sick, and a very large number have been elected within a very recent period. In very large or moderately sized workhouses these officers exist; but in numerous small country workhouses none have been appointed." Why have they been elected within a very recent period, and why are any country workhouses left without paid nurses now? Dr. Smith devotes three pages to a laboured statement, which reads like a wordy brief for the

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defence, but leaves this essential point untouched. Can it be that Mr. Hardy's friends, "the sensational writers," have brought about what the Poor Law Board and its officers shamefully neglected to enforce; and can Dr. Smith be unaware that his department can compel guardians to appoint paid nurses? "In moderately sized and small workhouses," we read, "one nurse may properly attend to thirty sick cases. In the larger workhouses, where there is a properly built infirmary, and where the wards are large, it is possible that more than that number might be allotted to one nurse." This is a reasonable estimate enough for day-nursing, but how are the patients to be looked after at night? We have seen during the workhouse experiences recorded in this journal, paid nurses who have secured their night's rest by putting several locked doors, long passages, and stone staircases between themselves and their patients whenever they went to bed; and unless some special arrangements for night-nursing be made, the thirty sick people confided to one nurse would be certainly overlooked.

And now as to local medical officers. One of them said to the writer of this article not long ago: "I can't do my duty to my patients for the simple reason that I can't afford it. The wards of my workhouse and its classification will not bear scrutiny. When I first put on harness here, I was young and enthusiastic, and tried hard to get the guardians to provide what I knew to be absolutely necessary. But I only gained ill-will for myself, and did no good for my patients, so I've just struggled on as well as I could. The parish board could soon make a man's life a burden if they took a prejudice against him; and I could tell you of instances in which a really zealous man has been worried into resigning, and a selfish drone appointed in his stead, who has been popular because he let things alone—in other words, because he neglected the paupers and did not trouble the guardians. Why, there's many a country workhouse where the doctor attends pretty much as he likes, and if it could be found out I haven't a doubt that deaths from medical neglect are far commoner than you'd suppose."

Dr. Smith's admissions are confirmatory of this appalling statement; for at page fifteen of the Report we find him saying calmly, "In practice there is much diversity of action amongst visiting medical officers, as to the frequency of their visits and the time devoted to their duties. In very many country workhouses the medical officer is required to attend but thrice (sometimes only twice) a week, and if he attend oftener it is on special requisition, or from a conviction that the eases require more frequent attention. Having regard to the fact that in almost every workhouse there is at least one case requiring constant medical supervision, I think" (wonderful boldness!) "it very important that arrangements should be made so that every medical officer of a workhouse shall attend daily, and also that he shall make his visit at or about a convenient and fixed hour. He should go into every sick ward daily, and should not wait to be requested to see any particular case. It should also, I think, be a part of his official duties to inspect every part of the workhouse once a week, and to report in writing to the guardians. This is not his duty at present, but it would do much to supply the defect which very generally exists in the unfrequent visits of the visiting committee."

"Much diversity of action," is Dr. Smith's discreet phrase for abominable neglect. It is not difficult to foresee the end of a sick man who requires medical attention every day, and whose doctor only sees him twice a week A paragraph concerning the power given to medical men to order stimulants for their patients describes the length of time during which they are ordered, and the quantity consumed to be "sufficiently astonishing," and names it as a subject which "will ultimately engage the attention of the Poor Law Board." If it be true that Dr. Smith is an ardent teetotaller, this side-blow at stimulants is ingenious and effective. It has already increased the difficulties of medical men. To the unprofessional mind it would seem that stingy and ignorant guardians should be precluded from dictating or even hinting to doctors what should be prescribed for patients. The only true way out of this and similar difficulties would be to make the medical officers' salaries wholly payable by the crown. Already half the workhouse doctor's income is derived from this source, while half is paid out of the rates; and by making him solely responsible to the Poor Law Board, we should at least rescue him from guardians and ensure uniformity of discipline.

A detailed account of the forty-eight workhouses visited comes next. The different inspectors having informed Dr. Smith which workhouses in their district they would prefer his seeing, the two officials pay their call together, measure wards, examine furniture, patrol yards and kitchens, and come away. Dr. Smith gives uncertain particulars of the workhouses he has visited, and with these is printed the last official statement of the inspector of the district. One of these gentlemen gives, in two places, "There is no cattle-plague here now," as part of his report upon the condition of a workhouse, as if paupers and animals were legislated for and classed together. Dr. Smith's record is dry and lifeless. Such headings as "There are no paid nurses," "The stimulants are administered by paupers," convey a world of bitter meaning to the initiated; but there is nothing to show that our medical adviser-in-chief considers such negligence reprehensible. One piece of information will be welcomed. It has often been asked what the ordinary process of workhouse inspection is, and why the flagrant evils brought to light by independent witnesses should have remained undetected or ignored by the gentlemen whose special duty it has been to find them out. The following list of questions by the government official and answers

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by the delinquents solves the mystery, and speaks for itself:

Extract from Report of E. Gulson, Esq., after a visit to Keynsham Union Workhouse, on the 10th April, 1866:

Is the workhouse generally adequate to the wants of the union in respect of size and internal arrangement?

Yes.

Is the provision for the sick and for infectious cases sufficient?

Yes.

Are the receiving wards in a proper state?

Yes.

Are there vagrant wards in the workhouse, and are they sufficient?

Yes, for the present.

Are the arrangements for setting the vagrants to work effective, and is the resolution of the guardians, under 5 and 6 Vict., c. 57, sect. 5, duly observed?

Yes.

Does the visiting committee regularly inspect the workhouse?

They visit frequently, but do not always fill up the book.

Do any of their answers to the queries in the workhouse regulations suggest the propriety of any interference on the part of the commissioners?

No.

Insert a copy of any entry made since your last visit in the visiting committee's book, or other report book, by a Commissioner in Lunacy.

None.

Has the maximum number of inmates of the workhouse, fixed by the commissioners, been constantly observed since your last visit?

Yes.

Has any marked change taken place in the state of the workhouse, the number of the inmates, or the general condition of the union, since your last visit?

No.

Observations not falling under any of the preceding heads, and points (if any) upon which it is suggested that the board should write to the guardians.

None.

Dr. Smith's reports are so arrranged and worded that an ordinary reader might plod through them without knowing they revealed shameful defects; and their author's professional knowledge is rarely exercised on behalf of the pauper. Where blame is given, it is so gentle, that it seems like modified praise, and it is only by a careful comparison and analysis of the different portions of the book that even a proximate understanding can be arrived at of the conclusions it conveys. Let us compare Mr. Hawley, the district inspector, with Dr. Smith. The former reports of the workhouse of Oldbury Union in August, 1866:

Is the workhouse generally adequate to the wants of the union in respect of size and internal arrangement?

Yes.

Is the provision for the sick and for infectious cases sufficient?

Yes.

Are the receiving wards in a proper state?

Yes.

Are there vagrant wards in the workhouse, and are they sufficient? Are the arrangements for setting the vagrants to work effective, and is the resolutions of the guardians under 5 and 6 Vict. c. 57, sect. 5, duly observed?

There are no vagrant wards; the sick vagrants are sent to the workhouse.

Dr. Smith remarks *in the following month* of the same union house:

Two sick women sleep in one bed.

The ventilation is effected by fireplaces, windows, and a few ventilators; but there were not any ventilators in the infectious wards.

There is not a paid nurse.

Hence there are many defects in this workhouse.

The medical officer attends about four days weekly, and remains about three-quarters of an hour at each visit.

So that, in spite of reticence and discretion, we come to the bare fact that the medical inspector in chief finds "many defects," where the local inspector declares "internal arrangements to be adequate."

Mr. Andrew Doyle, who recently distinguished himself by the rudeness with which he charged one of the Lancet commissioners with falsehood, reported of the Birkenhead union workhouse, in July, 1866:

Is the workhouse generally adequate to the wants of the union, in respect of size and internal arrangement?

Yes; except that the schools have not yet been built, although a school has been organised in the body of the house.

Is the provision for the sick and for infectious cases sufficient?

Yes.

And the value of his certificate will be gathered from Dr. Smith's guarded report in February, 1867, which says:

There is no system of ventilation whatever in the hospital, except the ordinary one of doors and windows, and the latter were in some wards opened at the top. It is, in my opinion, essential that a system of ventilation should be introduced, and air bricks placed in the outer walls. Large openings over the doors, and ventilators in the ceilings of the upper rooms, were also suggested. At present the ventilation is defective. There are iron gratings in the corridor floors.

There are two paid nurses, man and wife, in charge of the hospital and fever wards, who, with pauper help, attend to all the cases, by night and day, and give each dose of medicines and stimulants. There is not a paid night nurse, and considering that there are fever cases now in the wards, and probably always will be, I do not think that it is satisfactory.

Some few inspectors, notably Mr. Cane, Mr. Farnall, and Mr. Graves, make frequent suggestions in their reports, and in several instances go far beyond Dr. Smith in their advocacy of reforms. Mr. Robert Weale, too, writes as follows:

The Hatfield Union presents a very different appearance from any other in my district, and I have repeatedly referred to it in my inspectional reports. The Commissioners in Lunacy have frequently referred to this workhouse in terms depreciatory of its condition. The guardians, of whom the Marquis of Salisbury is the chairman, have re-

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plied to communications addressed to them on the subject, that inasmuch as the workhouse resembles the general habitations of the labouring classes, they believe it to be more agreeable and satisfactory to the inmates than a building of a more regular and systematised character. I submit that the Poor Law Board should write to the guardians, and say that I have forwarded to them a copy of the report I made of my inspection in the visitors' book, and request to be favoured with the remarks of the guardians upon it.

It would be curious to know what action was taken on the above, and whether Mr. Fleming and the Marquis of Salisbury had any angry correspondence respecting what is "agreeable and satisfactory." At Nottingham, which, if we mistake not, is in the district formerly inspected by Dr. Smith himself, we find from his report that hale children were "lying in a ward in which were others suffering from scarlet fever." Of Sheffield workhouse, Mr. Farnall complains of the internal arrangements, and says certain sick wards in it "are dark and cheerless, too dark, in fact, to enable the medical officer to examine the cases with accuracy;" and Dr. Smith explains that

It is situate in the centre of the town of Sheffield, on the low land on the banks of the river, where it has been found difficult to obtain very good drainage and ventilation. The main building is a disused mill, and was not constructed as a workhouse, and hence the rooms are large in all their dimensions, and not so convenient for the purpose in hand as is desirable.

Dr. Smith concludes his general report by saying, plausibly enough, "it is proper that any defects which exist should be removed, and that the state of the sick wards in workhouses and the treatment of the sick should contrast not unfavourably with the arrangements of a fairly conducted general hospital." It is much to be regretted that his information is not so conveyed as to lead up to this result. Valour would, in this instance, have been the better part of discretion. If he had had the courage to speak out boldly, he would have presented the authorities with a report which they might condemn as "sensational," but which his own conscience would tell him was true.

TOLD BY A SKIPPER.

We were bound up the noble river Yang-tai-Kiang, the Chinese Son of the Sea, my old friend Mellen and myself, in our respective lorchas, making for Nankin. Side by side, our lorchas had kept each other company nearly all the day. We made but little progress, for the wind came in light and fitful gusts, so that for every three feet we sailed against the strong current we were drifted back about two. As the splendid autumn day wore on, and the long dark shadows falling across the face of the earth began to herald the approach of the delightful tropical evening, the inconstant breeze fell away altogether, and we were compelled to anchor for the night. Mellen frequently hailed me to join him at dinner, to which I gave a willing assent, for not only was I alone on board my own vessel, that is to say without any European companion; but I well knew the many comforts possessed by my friend, he being accompanied by his wife, and a woman *does* somehow bring the amenities of civilised life to any community.

Mellen was a native of Savannah; his better half came from Macao, and was a full-blooded Chinese. Though a daughter of the Celestial Empire, Mrs. Mellen neither had those frightfully artificial deformities called "small feet," nor did the outer corners of her purely Chinese eyes point upward. Hers were unusually straight, full of expression, of the most brilliant liquid black, now melting into tenderness, now flashing with the fiery passions of the East; her complexion was a rich tawny olive, with that smooth, close-grained skin so peculiarly a pleasing attraction of the Chinese. Her teeth were perfect and dazzlingly white; though the mouth, small and pretty as those of her countrywomen generally are, seldom parted sufficiently to show them; this rather unusual immobility tending to produce an expression of firmness. Her hair was raven black, hanging in the luxuriance common to Celestial beauties, and her semi-European dress admirably became her lithe, graceful, and petite figure.

One day, having made all snug on board my own vessel, I joined my friends. When dinner was over, and the unexceptionable manilla and fragrant coffee produced, and my friend's wife had seated herself lovingly at his feet, I reminded him of a promise to tell me how he managed to escape from the Imperialists when they took him prisoner during the last war.

"It was all owing to my brave little wife," he said.

Mrs. Mellen would not let her husband commence until the cradle containing their only child had been brought from an inner cabin and placed by her side.

"You must know," began my friend, without further preamble, "that when you Britishers had determined to make a war upon the Chinese for endeavouring to enforce their own revenue laws in the case of the Arrow—I was busily engaged with a vessel of my own, running cargoes of tea from Canton to Hong-Kong, and taking back opium for native merchants anxious to realise coin before the commencement of hostilities. If that trade had lasted, I should have made a pretty considerable fortune. But, somehow, your officials seemed to have made ready for a war long before any event occurred to justify their preparations. A large fleet of gun-boats had gradually been collected at Hong-Kong, and formidable operations were initiated at Canton.

"Upon the part of the Chinese, the notorious commissioner Yeh had arrived, and during a desultory and unproclaimed warfare, I made several very successful trips. My lorcha was well armed; I had a crew devoted to my interests, and although every day brought

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tidings of the capture of some vessel engaged in the same trade, with full details of the horrible butchery of their crews, success had made me blindly confident. I laughed to scorn the proclamation of Yeh offering a reward of five dollars for every white man's head, twenty-five for every prisoner, and a proportionately higher amount for the capture of any 'barbarian' officer.

"The Canton river, from the sea to the city of that name, is a vast labyrinth of different channels; some wide and majestic as the main branch, others narrow, nameless, and tortuous. I doubt whether any European ever possessed so good a knowledge of these waters as myself. I trusted to my acquaintance with the intricate channels to escape observation; I trusted to the swiftness of my lorcha to avoid pursuit if discovered, and I trusted to our heavy armament and strong crew in case of attack.

"I had just safely reached Hong-Kong with a full cargo of choice teas, and the place was in a tremendous uproar about the attempt the Chinese had made to poison the whole colony by mixing arsenic with the bread, when I received the offer of another and still higher freight, to be taken up at Whampoa, the small town below Canton, where vessels lie to take in and discharge their cargoes. The service had now really become extremely dangerous, the river and coast being scoured by Chinese row-boats and war-junks, the crews of which were eagerly looking out for every available chance to pocket the liberal blood money offered for the head of any and every 'foreign devil.'

"My friends tried hard to dissuade me from the venture; my wife, too, did her best—we had only been married about thirteen months—and a mother's tender solicitude for her first-born made her timid. Against the prudent counsel of wife and friends my wayward nature rebelled. The native merchant who made the agreement hinted at the best route by which to reach Whampoa, declaring that all others were now watched by the Imperialist gunboats and their bloodthirsty crews. A shade of suspicion crossed my mind at this statement, for I did not entirely believe it, feeling pretty sure that the mandarins had not a sufficient number of vessels to accomplish so much. Still, it was too late to retract; the agreement had been signed; I had publicly announced my determination to make the voyage, and was, moreover, getting the lorcha under weigh when the Chinaman came on board with the information.

"My crew now consisted of myself and mate, Jack Ikey, a young English sailor who had been some time with me; also of a European just engaged as supernumerary or second mate, Joe—the only name by which he was known—a tall and powerful Frenchman, who had a well-earned reputation for prowess, and who was the hero of many a perilous adventure in Chinese territory; also six Manillamen, and, lastly, a complement of twenty-five Chinese sailors, officered by my father-in-law and his one assistant.

"The lorcha was well found in everything—sails, spars, stores, ammunition, nothing was wanting; and she was heavily armed with two pivot guns, a long eighteen amidships, a carronade of the same calibre forward, as well as three nine-pounders on each broadside. Besides this, we carried a supply of the dreaded 'stinkpots,' those suffocating, burning hand-grenades common to Chinese warfare. Not a vessel on the coast could overhaul her; as for the Imperialist ti-mungs (sea-going war-junks), she could sail three feet to their one.

"Thinking of all this, as I puffed away at my cheroot, and bent over the weather rail, watching the deep blue water glide rapidly astern, I laughed to scorn my former suspicion and presentiment; my spirits became elate as my beautiful lorcha dashed away from the safe Hong-Kong anchorage, a fine fresh breeze filling her canvas, a clear blue sky, and a bright golden sunshine smiling propitiously at the commencement of her voyage.

"A-choong, my father-in-law, in whose sagacity I had every confidence, had been so certain of our charterer's good faith, that I determined to follow the route indicated by the latter; not only to avoid the enemy supposed to be on the alert elsewhere, but also because it formed one of the most direct channels I knew.

"About four o'clock in the afternoon we passed the celebrated Bocca Tigris, that rocky throat, between the sides of which the great estuary of the Canton river becomes narrowed to a breadth considerably less than two miles. We passed it in the far distance, and could only just distinguish the outlines of the British men-of-war forming the blockading squadron, behind which appeared the blackness of the pass, thrown into deep shadow by the tall impending cliffs on either hand. Sailing along the coast, about half way to Macao, amongst a numerous cluster of small islands, we came to the channel I had been advised to take; but, as it was getting dark, we were obliged to anchor till daylight. Scarcely had the anchor reached the bottom, when a small quick-pulling boat put off from the shore, and a yellow-skinned, bony, squinting, and altogether villanous-looking Chinaman scrambled on board; he made his way aft, 'chin-chinning,' grinning, and wishing to know whether we required a pilot.

"'Chi loh! (be off), you ugly sinner,' cried my mate.

"But the intruder would not budge, and as he excused the delay by asking whether we required any fruit or vegetables, or a gang of coolies to work the cargo upon reaching our destination, I could not exactly tell whether, with his horribly squinting and oblique eyes, he was looking at me, or taking a survey of my vessel, her crew and armament; I rather fancied the latter.

"'Pass him over the side, Jack,' said I, feeling assured, from his general appearance, that the fellow was no pilot.

"The mate responded by seizing the Chinaman's tail close up with one hand, and the

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hinder part of his voluminous inexpressibles with the other, and then running him to the gangway, where a parting salutation sent him quickly into his boat.

"Poor Jack! He payed dearly for that thoughtless act and playful kick.

"As the boat pulled away ashore, never shall I forget the frightful expression illuminating the Chinaman's naturally repulsive countenance! As he shook his fist at my unfortunate mate, he chuckled to himself with a fiendish sort of glee; he seemed to revel, by anticipation, in some revenge.

"Upon getting close in shore, several men crept from beneath the little mat awning in the boat, put out fresh oars, and urged her at a rapid rate up the channel we were waiting to follow in the morning. I did not take any particular notice of this proceeding, thinking that the soi-disant pilot was in a hurry to get home, and had therefore called the rest of his boat's crew from their sleep or opium-pipes. The Frenchman, Joe, having lit his pipe, carefully smoked it out. At the end of his meditations, he said:

"'Capitan, pe gar! I have see him before!'

"Further than this indefinite declaration, I could only elicit Joe's belief that he had met the man a long time ago in an encounter with pirates. This did not in the least surprise me, for the amphibious natives of the Chinese seaboard are, like their naval defenders, as much pirates as anything else. Leaving a strict watch on deck, I joined my wife in the cabin, and thought no more of the self-styled pilot.

"The early part of the following day continued wet and stormy. As both tide and wind were against us, we were obliged to wait for the making of the flood shortly after noon. The weather cleared up at the same time. Not a sign of Imperialist gunboat could we see. All things appeared favourable as we entered the river and proceeded on our voyage.

"We were just getting lunch in the cabin, when Joe, whom I had left in charge of the deck, rushed up to the skylight, and sang out:

"'Capitan! capitan! com up to de deck! Vîte! Quick! quick! De Chinois—de mandarins have come——' Before he could say more, the loud roar of artillery told me that we were attacked, and several shot came crashing through the lorcha's topsides.

"Hastily snatching up our revolvers, Jack Ikey and myself rushed on deck: before doing so, I made my wife lie down on the cabin floor, which was below the water-line, and consequently safe from the enemy's fire. At a glance I saw how matters stood. We had just turned an angle in the channel, and had sailed right into a formidable ambuscade of four ti-mungs, two on either side, lying in wait for us behind the projecting piece of land. Two of them had already cut off our retreat (we having shot past them) by sheering broadside on across the stream, and opening fire at us in conjunction with their consorts—the latter bearing down one on either bow. It was plain that our only chance of escape consisted in standing on, getting past the two vessels ahead, and trusting to our superior sailing qualities. Fortunately, instead of steering across our bows, and so completely hemming us in, they were edging down to engage us broadside to broadside. I at once ordered my lorcha to be steered right between them. The guns were then loaded with a half charge of powder and a double charge of grape and canister. Both my European comrades were capital marksmen, and to them I entrusted the half-dozen rifles on board, ordering them to confine their attention to the helmsmen of the approaching enemy, whilst I personally superintended the working of our big guns.

"On came the two headmost war-junks, painted in the most horrifying manner, with huge eyes and hideous faces, their colours flying, gongs beating, and crews yelling—altogether a most tremendous din, and in which these 'celestial' warriors placed considerable hope of terrifying us. A man was stationed at each of their mastheads, and by his side a basketful of those terrible 'stinkpots.' I followed their example by sending one of my crew to the fore and another to the main mast-head, where supplies of the missile were already hoisted.

"The vessels astern were engaged reloading; a long operation, the guns being lashed as fixtures to the broadside, in the usual Chinese fashion, which makes it necessary for the men to get outside the rail (and stand upon a platform built for that purpose) to load them. Consequently, we had a short time to devote exclusively to the junks ahead. These latter were now within a couple of hundred yards, one about four points on each bow, and were thus getting into the best position to become targets for our pivot guns; moreover, being end on, they offered us a capital opportunity to rake them fore and aft.

"I ran to the foremost gun, training it at the ti-mung on our port bow, waiting until she was within a hundred yards, and then firing with a long and steady aim. The double charge of grape and canister swept her decks, and, by the confusion and the cries that ensued, must have caused great havoc. Leaving the gun to the crew to reload, I went aft to the long eighteen, and gave the ti-mung on our starboard bow a similar dose. Again rose the cries and shouts, for my second shot had proved as effective as the first. However, the Imperialists were not to be conquered easily; a savage yell of defiance soon rang forth, and, as they came fairly abeam, we were greeted with the simultaneous discharge of their heavy broadsides—each vessel mounting from ten to fifteen guns a side. Fortunately, I had made all hands lie flat on deck, to avoid the coming fire, which, ill aimed and irregular, mostly flew high above our heads, tearing huge rents in our sails, but only wounding one man with a splinter from the mainmast.

"Scarcely had the last shot whizzed and hurtled through our rigging when my men

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were on their feet: they gave the enemy a loud shout of defiance, and followed it up by letting drive our broadside guns—again with terrible effect, for I saw great gaps cut amidst the numbers crowding the decks of the ti-mungs, whilst the splinters flew from their bulwarks in a cloud.

"During this time my two mates were not idle, the discharge of their rifles having been incessant. As I expected, my fiery little wife, here, would not remain where I had placed her in safety, but had stationed herself on the companion-ladder; and when I went aft, there I found her busily employed reloading the rifles for my comrades.

"Having turned that bend in the river, we now had the wind right aft; but our two immediate antagonists had been obliged to sail close-hauled, and so approach us on an oblique line. Upon getting abeam and delivering their broadsides, they were necessarily brought head to wind, and compelled to put about. While they were attempting this, my two sharpshooters picked off every man that showed himself at the helm, and consequently threw them into a state of confusion: being unable to steer, they could not accomplish the necessary manœuvre of tacking. At this moment, the sternmost vessels, having reloaded, let drive another broadside, but in so thoroughly Chinese a manner that at least half the shots intended for us took effect on their consorts.

"'Skipper,' cried poor Jack Ikey, 'I've potted nine yellow skins at the helm of that port ti-mung, for certain; Joe says that he can score thirteen for the other; they can never tack while we keep this going, so luff up and slap another broadside or two into them.' Enraged at the treachery of the ambuscade into which I had been enticed by the deceitful native merchant, and excited by the fell spirit of war, as well as influenced by my mate's request, I ordered the helm to be put a-starboard, brought the lorcha to the wind, and foolhardily accepted the proffered but unequal combat. The ti-mung that had passed us on the port hand, we disabled in no time; but meanwhile, the other ti-mung had been neglected. The crew of this vessel, having recovered from their confusion, had successfully effected the manœuvre of tacking; she was now sailing up to us, closely followed by her two sternmost consorts. She was the largest, heaviest armed, and most formidable of our antagonists; and now, from her position and the course she was steering, right across our bows, would certainly grapple and try to carry us by boarding. I instantly made arrangements to counteract the danger. From the altered position of the vessels, my sharpshooters were no longer able to pick off the enemy's helmsmen; so I directed them to confine their attention to the fellows at the mastheads, whom it was desirable they should shoot down before getting within stinkpot range, as if any of those missiles landed on our decks, the burning, suffocating explosion would prevent either the efficient working or fighting of our vessel, and would thereby cause us to fall an easy prey. Seeing that it would be impossible to avoid coming to close quarters, I ordered the boarding nettings to be triced up. Then the muskets were brought on deck, loaded, and served out to all hands, with bayonets and ammunition. The big guns were quickly recharged, and this time with bags of musket balls, excepting only the after pivot gun—the long eighteen—which I had carefully double-shotted, and reserved for a particular purpose. By this time the leading ti-mung was close upon us, her decks crowded with men—some ready to board, others standing by their guns, match in hand, and the rest handling their bows and arrows or matchlocks.

"A moment of concentrated suspense followed, every breath restrained, every faculty absorbed in expectation of the coming deadly strife. The creaking aloft, and the rippling of the waters cut by the approaching vessels, alone broke the oppressive silence. Suddenly the sharp and simultaneous crack of two rifles terminated the painful interval, and I saw on the face of each of my mates a stern, satisfied expression. From the enemy's junk there came a loud cry of mortal agony, as a man fell heavily from her mainmast-head, and another at the fore clung helpless and wounded to his giddy perch.

"Those rifle cracks had broken the charm, and now the hideous noise of war once more resounded over the glittering waters. A savage yell burst forth from the enemy as they began shooting away with their gingals, matchlocks, bows and arrows. A couple of fresh men, nimble as monkeys, sprang up aloft to the missiles at her mast-heads.

"'Now then, Frenchy,' cried my mate to his companion, getting warmed by the fray, 'bring them down again!'

"We were now within twenty yards of the ti-mung; another two or three seconds would bring us muzzle to muzzle.

"'Ready, there, with the guns?' I shouted.

"'All ready, sir,' promptly responded my Manillamen.

"I cried to the steersman, 'Port a little—port!' and, as the lorcha answered her helm, gave the command—'Fire!'

"Both vessels delivered their broadsides at the same moment, and with terrible effect at that short range. Only four of the Manillamen came aft in obedience to my orders to resist boarders on the quarter; the other two, and six of my Cantonese, had been killed by the enemy's round shot. Our broadside inflicted a much heavier loss upon our antagonist. Yet, in spite of the numbers killed and wounded, she still held on her course, closed with us, and grappled fast. Her decks presented a ghastly spectacle, but I had little time to notice it, for fresh numbers of men swarmed up from where they had been sheltered in her hold, and rushed to board us. Fore and aft, on the bow, on the quarter, amidships, and everywhere, they clustered to the attack, uttering the most dreadful yells, the

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ferocious cry, 'Tah! tah-h-h!' But we were ready for them, musket or rifle in hand. Every man that touched our boarding nettings lost his life, many falling between the two vessels. Fortunately, my mates prevented the enemy using their terrible 'stinkpots,' by shooting down man after man as they tried to ascend the rigging for that purpose. Upon our side, the two men at our mastheads, not being exposed to expert marksmen, had managed to throw several of their missiles. These, however, had not taken effect, having been caught by men specially told off for that duty, and who were stationed at different parts of our antagonist's deck.*

"'Tah! tah!' yelled a particularly shrill and savage voice, giving the commands on board our assailant.

"Jack Ikey was standing by my side. He started at the sound of that voice, lowered his rifle, and exclaimed:

"'By Heaven! skipper, it is that rascal I helped over the side last night!'

"Sure enough there he stood, the sham pilot, the spy who had so cunningly boarded us in order to ascertain our strength and armament, bedecked in mandarin hat, button, and feathers, as commodore of the squadron.

"Jack hastily capped his rifle, hissed between his teeth two words, took a steady aim, and fired.

"The mandarin, however, had seen his movement and intention, and sprang aside, too late to avoid the shot, but quick enough to spoil my mate's deadly aim, and only receive a wound in the arm, instead of a bullet through the heart.

"At this critical instant, when, in all probability, we should have been able to get clear of the vessel that had run us aboard, by taking advantage of the confusion consequent upon her commander's injury, we were compelled to forego the opportunity by turning to defend ourselves in a new quarter. The two sternmost ti-mungs had been enabled to come up since our way had been checked through being grappled by their consort. The nearest of them was now rounding-to under our stern, and preparing to rake us with a broadside that would be delivered within pistol range. This was the moment for which I had reserved our 'Long Tom.' Shouting to my men forward to let go the fore-sheet, so as to cause the lorcha to fly up in the wind, I took the trigger lanyard in my own hand; then, as our rapidly altered position brought this fresh assailant two or three points on the quarter (in the very place I desired, and which prevented her delivering a broadside through fear that it might injure her commodore's vessel), I fired my long eighteen, and had the satisfaction to see its double charge of two round-shot tear a great rent in her bow, betwixt wind and water.

"Fortunately, the heavy recoil of the gun gave so great a shock to the lorcha that it parted the principal fastening by which the big ti-mung had lashed herself alongside, and which had already been strained to the utmost as we flew up in the wind, after letting go the fore-sheet, dragging the lumbering and heavy war-junk after us. Not a second was to be lost. With a loud shout I ordered my mates—Manillamen, Cantonese, and all, to throw off the remaining grapnels. In another instant we were free, and slowly forging ahead.

"But now the second of the sternmost vessels had overhauled us, and for some ten or fifteen minutes we maintained a running fight, almost muzzle to muzzle, right between her and our big antagonist, one on either beam. Providentially the breeze increased, and in a few moments our superior sailing qualities enabled us to leave the enemy astern, otherwise they would certainly have sunk or captured us. As it was, more than half my crew were placed hors-de-combat.

"Poor Joe! Whilst so closely engaged with the two ti-mungs, a round shot, fired while almost touching him, had cut his body in half.

"Our decks were an awful sight, and I left Jack Ikey to clear them directly we entered a channel intersecting that which I had originally taken, and which led to the sea within a short distance of Macao. We had gained considerably on our pursuers, who gave up the chase as soon as we entered this branch of the river, feeling satisfied, no doubt, that as long as the breeze lasted, they would not be able to overhaul us again.

"Little did I suspect the cunning course they were about to pursue!

"Having received a slight but painful wound in the shoulder, I went below for my wife to dress it. I began to feel sick and faint, and as no trace of our late assailants could be seen, as nothing but a number of trading junks were in sight, and although the breeze was failing with the approach of night, I could not resist the inclination to sleep; I turned in. How long I had been sleeping I cannot tell, when, suddenly, in the middle of the night, I was aroused by a violent shock, followed by the report of firearms, the trampling of many feet overhead, and the hideous yelling of Chinese warfare. I snatched up a revolver, and rushed on deck, accompanied by my wife.

"The first glimpse was enough: we were in the hands of the Imperialists! The decks were full of them, and still they came. They were jumping on board by dozens from the cocked-up ends of a couple of big junks of the trading class that were hanging fast to us, one on each side.

"We were lying at anchor off the coast, and I knew in an instant how the affair had taken

* Chinese vessels generally carry two or three hands expressly engaged for the duty of catching stinkpots, at which they are very expert. No one else could catch the thin clay jars without breaking them. The missiles are harmless if not broken, as the combustible contents do not then come into contact with the pieces of burning charcoal, or joss stick, fastened outside.

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place, for I had narrowly escaped capture by pirates upon several previous occasions in a similar manner. The junks, their position, the secrecy of the attack, and the sudden crash alongside, all told me plainly enough the nature of the cunning and successful stratagem. Instead of continuing the stern chase in their heavy ti-mungs, the enemy had transferred their men to the trading junks, leisurely sailed after us, and passed ahead when we had cleared the river without exciting my mate's suspicion. Their course was then easy: they had waited until the flood tide made us anchor, had then moved right ahead, and, connecting themselves together by a strong rope, had dropped silently down upon us with the current, steering, using their long sweeps, or hauling on the line as required until it caught across our cable, when the strong tide instantly sheered them alongside.

"When I reached the top step of the companion-ladder, by the glare of the lanterns and torches carried by the swarming boarders, I saw Jack Ikey fighting desperately in their midst, and striving to cut his way aft. A tall figure, with lifted sword, stole up behind him. I recognised the false pilot, the mandarin commanding the squadron by which we had been attacked; and it was at this moment that I again saw upon his repulsive countenance the frightful expression to which I referred when describing the look he gave poor Jack after being turned out of the lorcha when he boarded us at the entrance of the river. All this took place during the second or two I stood concealed in the cabin hatchway, gazing at the scene on deck. I lifted my revolver to shoot the wretch, but my wife snatched it out my hand, and concealed it under her own clothes, whispering,

"'Do not fight now; it is too late. Our only chance is to submit quietly, and then watch for an opportunity to escape. Perhaps they will not kill us at once.'

"In a second the sword had fallen upon my unfortunate young mate and he sank upon the deck. We retreated to our cabin, and in less than two minutes were bound hand and foot. We had bidden each other a last farewell, every moment expecting to be slaughtered. But it seemed that we were not to be killed yet. The villanous-looking mandarin—the murderer of poor Jack — ordered away his blood-stained men, directing them to get out of the hold and take ashore what cargo and opium we had, whilst, with his principal officers—the captains of the other ti-mungs, I concluded—he proceeded to make merry over my wine, brandy, and other stores.

"They were talking about us, the wretches! and I understood Chinese well enough to know what they were saying.

"'Sar?' (cut) said one, significantly sawing the air sideways with his hand, whilst making the laconic inquiry.

"'No,' replied his chief. 'We will take them alive to his excellency Yeh. The Fankwei ('foreign devil') we shall be able to pass off as an officer, and so obtain the offered reward, as well as have the gratification of seeing him treated—as all his barbarian countrymen should be—to the ling-chy! (i.e. the horrible torture of 'cutting into ten thousand pieces'). 'As for the woman, she has inflicted a disgrace upon the "children of Han" (the Chinese), so the Imperial commissioner will no doubt think proper to make an example of her, in order to deter our countrywomen from contracting such alliances with the "outer barbarians."'

"After gulping down large quantities of my brandy, the four rascals went on deck to look after the opium and other articles that their men were carrying off and stowing away on board the junks.

"Scarcely had they vanished up the companion-way when a slight tap came against the bulkhead across the fore part of the cabin, and I heard the voice of my father-in-law, the lowder.

"'Captin Mellen,' said he, 'mi no have die. Twelve piecee man have makee hide down fore side. 'Spose by-em-by some mandarin man makee go shore, 'spose you talkee makee fight can do, can catchee lorcha back again.'

"'All right, A-choong,' said I. 'Keep close where you are. They are getting out the opium and things; I think some of them are likely to go ashore with the plunder; if they do, knock down the bulkhead when I tell you, get these ropes off my hands and feet, then we will soon have the lorcha under our own charge again. Have the men kept their arms?'

"I now understood that twelve of my men were battened down in the forecastle, whilst my lowder had hidden himself in the hold, and, after having communicated with the men on the other side of the foremost bulkhead, had come aft to that dividing the cabin from the hold, through which he had spoken to me.

"My heart thrilled at the thought of escape; but how could it be possible.

"'Oh, Ma-le! Ma-le!' I cried to my wife, when we were left alone, 'why did you prevent me shooting the mandarin? We should then have been killed at once; but now!'

"'Wait, my husband. Remember I am armed. I have your revolver and my dagger. We have yet a chance. I heard the mandarin sending those men away with the junks and the plunder. When they have gone, there will not be many soldiers left on board; then I will slip my hands out, cut the ropes with which you are bound, and we shall be able to make a last effort. If we fail, then it will be a quick death. But our poor little child!'

"My wife was interrupted by the return of the mandarin, and at the same time we heard the junks casting off from alongside.

"Our captor was accompanied by one attendant, who carried writing materials. Seating himself at the cabin-table, he wrote a letter and gave it to the man, saying:

"'Be off, now, and take this to the officer in charge of the ti-mungs. You can remain on board, and assist in bringing them here. Take half the men with you; leave me the other twenty-

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five. Use the "fast boat," and, mind, make the men bend to their oars, for I am in a hurry to have the ti-mungs brought round. Tell the officer I have another expedition in view.'

"Away went the bearer of the letter. I felt my heart beat audibly with hope and excitement. Only twenty-five men to be left on board! Oh, if my brave wife should be able to set me free! If I could liberate the men in the forecastle!

"'Hi! Fan-kwei!' exclaimed the villanous mandarin, addressing me. 'How muchee dollar have got? What place keepee he?'

"I had only two or three hundred dollars on board, and it occurred to me that by giving them up and indulging the passion of avarice gleaming from his cunning, squinting, oblique eyes, I might throw the wretch off his guard.

"'Have got inside that smallo piecee box in other cabin,' I replied.

"He quickly went into the after cabin, where the old nurse was lying bound, and where, also, our first-born was sleeping in its cradle calmly.

"In another moment the monster returned, the money in one hand, our poor little infant in the other.

"'More dollar,' said he—'more dollar. What placee have got more dollar?' And he shook the little innocent threateningly.

"'Man,' I cried, 'there is not another dollar on board!'

"Alas! my bonds were firm and immovable. Every second I expected to see Ma-le shoot or stab him. But she had nerves of iron. She knew that an alarm would sacrifice all, and she restrained herself, though by so doing she became a witness to the murder of our child.

The man then turned to my wife, saying:

"'Dollar! dollar! 'Spose you no talkee mi what placee have makee hid, mi killee you smallo piecee chillo.'

"Oh, the agony of that moment! My poor Ma-le, how you must have suffered!"

My friend's wife sobbed loudly at this point of his narration, and drew the cradle closer to her side. I now appreciated her motive in having it brought to her when he commenced the tale.

"Well," continued Mellen, "my wife threw herself before him, entreating him to spare the child, and assuring him that there was not another dollar on board.

"Before she could rise, our infant was killed by the mandarin. Then, turning to go on deck, he said:

"'Spose you no talkee mi what placee have got more dollar, mi give you allo mi man—allo man takee you allo same wife.'

"I shuddered at the hideous nature of this threat, and bowed down my head, unable to gaze upon the bleeding form of our murdered child.

"A sudden noise, then a low moan, made me look up. By the light of the dimly burning cabin lamp I saw Ma-le drawing her dagger. She had sprung upon our enemy like a tigress, just as he had turned his back to ascend the companion-ladder, and her sharp poignard, driven with fatal precision through the neck, had struck him lifeless to the floor. So true, so deadly was the aim, that only one low moan escaped him.

"In another moment my hands were free; then, Ma-le, you cut away the cords from my feet, placed the revolver in my hand, and began to load the double-barrelled fowling-piece that you took from the case under my bed, whilst I stealthily crept up the companion-way on deck. It was just that silent, chilly, oppressive hour of the morning — between black midnight and grey dawn—when, on a dark night, the darkness is most profound, and its peculiar haziness makes all objects most invisible. Neither moon nor star could be seen, and step by step I safely crawled past the whole of our captors then on board. I dared not breathe as I stole along beneath the shadow of the bulwarks. The suspense of that moment was something fearful, and my heart throbbed painfully.

"The Imperialists were assembled round a a couple of big lanterns, following the usual and besetting vice of Chinese soldiers and sailors—that of gambling. They were so intent upon their small wooden cards, and their flaring lanterns threw every other part of the decks into such deep shade, that I managed to reach the forecastle hatch undiscovered. I removed the fastenings, and softly descended to my men, nine Cantonese and three Manilla-men. All were armed. In a few seconds I explained how matters stood, and called upon them to follow me; then, one by one, we crept up the ladder.

"'Fire!' I cried. The volley swept half the gambling guard into eternity, and with the bayonet we drove the rest overboard, just as my father-in-law ran up from the hold to assist us. With the exception of the twelve men who assisted me to recapture the lorcha, my crew had fallen during the hot engagement with the enemy and the subsequent night attack.

"We were free—free at last! My story is over. Before eight o'clock in the morning we were riding safely at anchor in the spacious harbour before the town of Victoria."

It was late when Mellen finished his tale. Two bells (one A.M.) had struck. I bade my friends good night, roused out my "Celestial" mariners from the opium-pipes and good cheer with which the crew of the lorcha had supplied them, and returned to my own vessel.

HOLIDAY ROMANCE,

By CHARLES DICKENS,

Will be concluded in the MONTHLY PART for April.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

CHAPTER XXII.—(CONTINUED.)

I WALKED to the window to compose myself. The rain had given over; and, who should I see in the courtyard, but Mr. Begbie, the gardener, waiting outside to continue the dog-rose controversy with Sergeant Cuff.

"My compliments to the Sairgent," said Mr. Begbie, the moment he set eyes on me. "If he's minded to walk to the station, I'm agreeable to go with him."

"What!" cries the Sergeant, behind me, "are you not convinced yet?"

"The deil a bit I'm convinced!" answered Mr. Begbie.

"Then I'll walk to the station!" says the Sergeant.

"Then I'll meet you at the gate!" says Mr. Begbie.

I was angry enough, as you know—but how was any man's anger to hold out against such an interruption as this? Sergeant Cuff noticed the change in me, and encouraged it by a word in season. "Come! come!" he said, "why not treat my view of the case as her ladyship treats it? Why not say, the circumstances have fatally misled me?"

To take anything as her ladyship took it, was a privilege worth enjoying—even with the disadvantage of it's having been offered to me by Sergeant Cuff. I cooled slowly down to my customary level. I regarded any other opinion of Miss Rachel, than my lady's opinion or mine, with a lofty contempt. The only thing I could *not* do, was to keep off the subject of the Moonstone! My own good sense ought to have warned me, I know, to let the matter rest—but, there! the virtues which distinguish the present generation were not invented in my time. Sergeant Cuff had hit me on the raw, and, though I did look down upon him with contempt, the tender place still tingled for all that. The end of it was that I perversely led him back to the subject of her ladyship's letter. "I am quite satisfied myself," I said. "But never mind that! Go on, as if I was still open to conviction. You think Miss Rachel is not to be believed on her word; and you say we shall hear of the Moonstone again. Back your opinion, Sergeant," I concluded, in an airy way. "Back your opinion."

Instead of taking offence, Sergeant Cuff seized my hand, and shook it till my fingers ached again.

"I declare to Heaven," says this strange officer solemnly, "I would take to domestic service to-morrow, Mr. Betteredge, if I had a chance of being employed along with You! To say you are as transparent as a child, sir, is to pay the children a compliment which nine out of ten of them don't deserve. There! there! we won't begin to dispute again. You shall have it out of me on easier terms than that. I won't say a word more about her ladyship, or about Miss Verinder—I'll only turn prophet, for once in a way, and for your sake. I have warned you already that you haven't done with the Moonstone yet. Very well. Now I'll tell you, at parting, of three things which will happen in the future, and which, I believe, will force themselves on your attention, whether you like it or not."

"Go on!" I said, quite unabashed, and just as airy as ever.

"First," said the Sergeant, "you will hear something from the Yollands—when the postman delivers Rosanna's letter at Cobb's Hole, on Monday next."

If he had thrown a bucket of cold water over me, I doubt if I could have felt it much more unpleasantly than I felt those words. Miss Rachel's assertion of her innocence had left Rosanna's conduct—the making the new nightgown, the hiding the smeared nightgown, and all the rest of it—entirely without explanation. And this had never occurred to me, till Sergeant Cuff forced it on my mind all in a moment!

"In the second place," proceeded the Sergeant, "you will hear of the three Indians again. You will hear of them in the neighbourhood, if Miss Rachel remains in the neighbourhood. You will hear of them in London, if Miss Rachel goes to London."

Having lost all interest in the three jugglers, and having thoroughly convinced myself of my young lady's innocence, I took this second prophecy easily enough. "So much for two of the three things that are going to happen," I said. "Now for the third!"

"Third, and last," said Sergeant Cuff, "you will, sooner or later, hear something of that money-lender in London, whom I have twice

taken the liberty of mentioning already. Give me your pocket-book, and I'll make a note for you of his name and address—so that there may be no mistake about it if the thing really happens."

He wrote accordingly on a blank leaf:— "Mr. Septimus Luker, Middlesex-place, Lambeth, London."

"There," he said, pointing to the address, "are the last words, on the subject of the Moonstone, which I shall trouble you with for the present. Time will show whether I am right or wrong. In the mean while, sir, I carry away with me a sincere personal liking for you, which I think does honour to both of us. If we don't meet again before my professional retirement takes place, I hope you will come and see me in a little house near London, which I have got my eye on. There will be grass walks, Mr. Betteredge, I promise you, in *my* garden. And as for the white moss rose——"

"The deil a bit ye'll get the white moss rose to grow, unless ye bud him on the dogue-rose first," cried a voice at the window.

We both turned round. There was the everlasting Mr. Begbie, too eager for the controversy to wait any longer at the gate. The Sergeant wrung my hand, and darted out into the court-yard, hotter still on his side. "Ask him about the moss rose, when he comes back, and see if I have left him a leg to stand on!" cried the great Cuff, hailing me through the window in his turn. "Gentlemen, both!" I answered, moderating them again as I had moderated them once already. "In the matter of the moss rose there is a great deal to be said on both sides!" I might as well (as the Irish say) have whistled jigs to a milestone. Away they went together, fighting the battle of the roses without asking or giving quarter on either side. The last I saw of them, Mr. Begbie was shaking his obstinate head, and Sergeant Cuff had got him by the arm like a prisoner in charge. Ah, well! well! I own I couldn't help liking the Sergeant—though I hated him all the time.

Explain that state of mind, if you can. You will soon be rid, now, of me and my contradictions. When I have reported Mr. Franklin's departure, the history of the Saturday's events will be finished at last. And when I have next described certain strange things that happened in the course of the new week, I shall have done my part of the Story, and shall hand over the pen to the person who is appointed to follow my lead. If you are as tired of reading this narrative as I am of writing it—Lord, how we shall enjoy ourselves on both sides a few pages further on!

CHAPTER XXIII.

I HAD kept the pony-chaise ready, in case Mr. Franklin persisted in leaving us by the train that night. The appearance of the luggage, followed down-stairs by Mr. Franklin himself, informed me plainly enough that he had held firm to a resolution, for once in his life.

"So you have really made up your mind, sir?" I said, as we met in the hall. "Why not wait a day or two longer, and give Miss Rachel another chance?"

The foreign varnish appeared to have all worn off Mr. Franklin, now that the time had come for saying good-bye. Instead of replying to me in words, he put the letter which her ladyship had addressed to him into my hand. The greater part of it said over again what had been said already in the other communication received by me. But there was a bit about Miss Rachel added at the end which will account for the steadiness of Mr. Franklin's determination, if it accounts for nothing else.

"You will wonder, I dare say" (her ladyship wrote) "at my allowing my own daughter to keep me perfectly in the dark. A Diamond worth twenty thousand pounds has been lost—and I am left to infer that the mystery of its disappearance is no mystery to Rachel, and that some incomprehensible obligation of silence has been laid on her, by some person or persons utterly unknown to me, with some object in view at which I cannot even guess. Is it conceivable that I should allow myself to be trifled with in this way? It is quite conceivable, in Rachel's present state. She is in a condition of nervous agitation pitiable to see. I dare not approach the subject of the Moonstone again until time has done something to quiet her. To help this end, I have not hesitated to dismiss the police-officer. The mystery which baffles us, baffles him too. This is not a matter in which any stranger can help us. He adds to what I have to suffer; and he maddens Rachel if she only hears his name.

"My plans for the future are as well settled as they can be. My present idea is to take Rachel to London—partly to relieve her mind by a complete change, partly to try what may be done by consulting the best medical advice. Can I ask you to meet us in town? My dear Franklin, you, in your way, must imitate my patience, and wait, as I do, for a fitter time. The valuable assistance which you rendered to the inquiry after the lost jewel is still an unpardoned offence, in the present dreadful state of Rachel's mind. Moving blindfold in this matter, you have added to the burden of anxiety which she has had to bear, by innocently threatening her secret with discovery, through your exertions. It is impossible for me to excuse the perversity which holds you responsible for consequences which neither you nor I could imagine or foresee. She is not to be reasoned with—she can only be pitied. I am grieved to have to say it, but, for the present, you and Rachel are better apart. The only advice I can offer you is, to give her time."

I handed the letter back, sincerely sorry for Mr. Franklin, for I knew how fond he was of my young lady; and I saw that her mother's account of her had cut him to the heart. "You know the proverb, sir," was all I said to him. "When

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things are at the worst, they're sure to mend. Things can't be much worse, Mr. Franklin, than they are now."

Mr. Franklin folded up his aunt's letter, without appearing to be much comforted by the remark which I had ventured on addressing to him.

"When I came here from London with that horrible Diamond," he said, "I don't believe there was a happier household in England than this. Look at the household now! Scattered, disunited—the very air of the place poisoned with mystery and suspicion! Do you remember that morning at the Shivering Sand, when we talked about my uncle Herncastle, and his birthday gift? The Moonstone has served the Colonel's vengeance, Betteredge, by means which the Colonel himself never dreamt of!"

With that, he shook me by the hand, and went out to the pony chaise.

I followed him down the steps. It was very miserable to see him leaving the old place, where he had spent the happiest years of his life, in this way. Penelope (sadly upset by all that had happened in the house) came round crying, to bid him good-bye. Mr. Franklin kissed her. I waved my hand as much as to say, "You're heartily welcome, sir." Some of the other female servants appeared, peeping after him round the corner. He was one of those men whom the women all like. At the last moment, I stopped the pony chaise, and begged as a favour that he would let us hear from him by letter. He didn't seem to heed what I said—he was looking round from one thing to another, taking a sort of farewell of the old house and grounds. "Tell us where you are going to, sir!" I said, holding on by the chaise, and trying to get at his future plans in that way. Mr. Franklin pulled his hat down suddenly over his eyes. "Going?" says he, echoing the word after me. "I am going to the devil!" The pony started at the word, as if he felt a Christian horror of it. "God bless you, sir, go where you may!" was all I had time to say, before he was out of sight and hearing. A sweet and pleasant gentleman! With all his faults and follies, a sweet and pleasant gentleman! He left a sad gap behind him, when he left my lady's house.

It was dull and dreary enough, when the long summer evening closed in, on that Saturday night.

I kept my spirits from sinking by sticking fast to my pipe and my Robinson Crusoe. The women (excepting Penelope) beguiled the time by talking of Rosanna's suicide. They were all obstinately of opinion that the poor girl had stolen the Moonstone, and that she had destroyed herself in terror of being found out. My daughter, of course, privately held fast to what she had said all along. Her notion of the motive which was really at the bottom of the suicide failed, oddly enough, just where my young lady's assertion of her innocence failed also. It left Rosanna's secret journey to Frizinghall, and Rosanna's proceedings in the matter of the nightgown, entirely unaccounted for. There was no use in pointing this out to Penelope; the objection made about as much impression on her as a shower of rain on a waterproof coat. The truth is, my daughter inherits my superiority to reason—and, in respect to that accomplishment, has got a long way ahead of her own father.

On the next day (Sunday), the close carriage, which had been kept at Mr. Ablewhite's, came back to us empty. The coachman brought a message for me, and written instructions for my lady's own maid and for Penelope.

The message informed me that my mistress had determined to take Miss Rachel to her house in London, on the Monday. The written instructions informed the two maids of the clothing that was wanted, and directed them to meet their mistresses in town at a given hour. Most of the other servants were to follow. My lady had found Miss Rachel so unwilling to return to the house, after what had happened in it, that she had decided on going to London direct from Frizinghall. I was to remain in the country, until further orders, to look after things indoors and out. The servants left with me were to be put on board wages.

Being reminded, by all this, of what Mr. Franklin had said about our being a scattered and disunited household, my mind was led naturally to Mr. Franklin himself. The more I thought of him, the more uneasy I felt about his future proceedings. It ended in my writing, by the Sunday's post, to his father's valet, Mr. Jeffco (whom I had known in former years) to beg he would let me know what Mr. Franklin had settled to do, on arriving in London.

The Sunday evening was, if possible, duller even than the Saturday evening. We ended the day of rest, as hundreds of thousands of people end it regularly, once a week, in these islands—that is to say, we all anticipated bedtime, and fell asleep in our chairs.

How the Monday affected the rest of the household I don't know. The Monday gave *me* a good shake up. The first of Sergeant Cuff's prophecies of what was to happen—namely, that I should hear from the Yollands—came true on that day.

I had seen Penelope and my lady's maid off in the railway with the luggage for London, and was pottering about the grounds, when I heard my name called. Turning round, I found myself face to face with the fisherman's daughter, Limping Lucy. Bating her lame foot and her leanness (this last a horrid drawback to a woman, in my opinion), the girl had some pleasing qualities in the eye of a man. A dark, keen, clever face, and a nice clear voice, and a beautiful brown head of hair counted among her merits. A crutch appeared in the list of her misfortunes. And a temper reckoned high in the sum total of her defects.

"Well, my dear," I said, "what do you want with me?"

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"Where's the man you call Franklin Blake?" says the girl, fixing me with a fierce look, as she rested herself on her crutch.

"That's not a respectful way to speak of any gentleman," I answered. "If you wish to inquire for my lady's nephew, you will please mention him as Mr. Franklin Blake."

She limped a step nearer to me, and looked as if she could have eaten me alive. "*Mr.* Franklin Blake!" she repeated after me. "Murderer Franklin Blake would be a fitter name for him."

My practice with the late Mrs. Betteredge came in handy here. Whenever a woman tries to put *you* out of temper, turn the tables, and put *her* out of temper instead. They are generally prepared for every effort you can make in your own defence, but that. One word does it as well as a hundred; and one word did it with Limping Lucy. I looked her pleasantly in the face; and I said—"Pooh!"

The girl's temper flamed out directly. She poised herself on her sound foot, and she took her crutch, and beat it furiously three times on the ground. "He's a murderer! he's a murderer! he's a murderer! He has been the death of Rosanna Spearman!" She screamed that answer out at the top of her voice. One or two of the people at work in the grounds near us looked up—saw it was Limping Lucy—knew what to expect from that quarter—and looked away again.

"He has been the death of Rosanna Spearman?" I repeated. "What makes you say that, Lucy?"

"What do you care? What does any man care? Oh! if she had only thought of the men as I think, she might have been living now!"

"She always thought kindly of *me*, poor soul," I said; "and, to the best of my ability, I always tried to act kindly by *her*."

I spoke those words in as comforting a manner as I could. The truth is, I hadn't the heart to irritate the girl by another of my smart replies. I had only noticed her temper at first. I noticed her wretchedness now—and wretchedness is not uncommonly insolent, you will find, in humble life. My answer melted Limping Lucy. She bent her head down, and laid it on the top of her crutch.

"I loved her," the girl said softly. "She had lived a miserable life, Mr. Betteredge—vile people had ill treated her and led her wrong—and it hadn't spoilt her sweet temper. She was an angel. She might have been happy with me. I had a plan for our going to London together like sisters, and living by our needles. That man came here, and spoilt it all. He bewitched her. Don't tell me he didn't mean it, and didn't know it. He ought to have known it. He ought to have taken pity on her. 'I can't live without him—and, oh, Lucy, he never even looks at me.' That's what she said. Cruel, cruel, cruel. I said, 'No man is worth fretting for in that way.' And she said, 'There are men worth dying for, Lucy, and he is one of them.' I had saved up a little money. I had settled things with father and mother. I meant to take her away from the mortification she was suffering here. We should have had a little lodging in London, and lived together like sisters. She had a good education, sir, as you know, and she wrote a good hand. She was quick at her needle. I have a good education, and I write a good hand. I am not as quick at my needle as she was—but I could have done. We might have got our living nicely. And, oh! what happens this morning? what happens this morning? Her letter comes, and tells me she has done with the burden of her life. Her letter comes, and bids me good-bye for ever. Where is he?" cries the girl, lifting her head from the crutch, and flaming out again through her tears. "Where's this gentleman that I mustn't speak of, except with respect? Ha, Mr. Betteredge, the day is not far off when the poor will rise against the rich. I pray Heaven they may begin with *him*. I pray Heaven they may begin with *him*."

Here was another of your average good Christians, and here was the usual break-down, consequent on that same average Christianity being pushed too far! The parson himself (though I own this is saying a great deal) could hardly have lectured the girl in the state she was in now. All I ventured to do was to keep her to the point—in the hope of something turning up which might be worth hearing.

"What do you want with Mr. Franklin Blake?" I asked.

"I want to see him."

"For anything particular?"

"I have got a letter to give him."

"From Rosanna Spearman?"

"Yes."

"Sent to you in your own letter?"

"Yes."

Was the darkness going to lift? Were all the discoveries that I was dying to make, coming and offering themselves to me of their own accord? I was obliged to wait a moment. Sergeant Cuff had left his infection behind him. Certain signs and tokens, personal to myself, warned me that the detective fever was beginning to set in again.

"You can't see Mr. Franklin," I said.

"I must, and will, see him."

"He went to London last night."

Limping Lucy looked me hard in the face, and saw that I was speaking the truth. Without a word more, she turned about again instantly towards Cobb's Hole.

"Stop!" I said. "I expect news of Mr. Franklin Blake to-morrow. Give me your letter, and I'll send it on to him by the post."

Limping Lucy steadied herself on her crutch, and looked back at me over her shoulder.

"I am to give it from my hands into his hands," she said. "And I am to give it to him in no other way."

"Shall I write, and tell him what you have said?"

"Tell him I hate him. And you will tell him the truth."

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"Yes, yes. But about the letter——?"

"If he wants the letter, he must come back here, and get it from Me."

With those words she limped off on the way to Cobb's Hole. The detective fever burnt up all my dignity on the spot. I followed her, and tried to make her talk. All in vain. It was my misfortune to be a man—and Limping Lucy enjoyed disappointing me. Later in the day, I tried my luck with her mother. Good Mrs. Yolland could only cry, and recommend a drop of comfort out of the Dutch bottle. I found the fisherman on the beach. He said it was "a bad job," and went on mending his net. Neither father nor mother knew more than I knew. The one chance left to try was the chance, which might come with the morning, of writing to Mr. Franklin Blake.

I leave you to imagine how I watched for the postman on Tuesday morning. He brought me two letters. One, from Penelope (which I had hardly patience enough to read), announced that my lady and Miss Rachel were safely established in London. The other, from Mr. Jeffco, informed me that his master's son had left England already.

On reaching the metropolis, Mr. Franklin had, it appeared, gone straight to his father's residence. He arrived at an awkward time. Mr. Blake, the elder, was up to his eyes in the business of the House of Commons, and was amusing himself at home that night with the favourite parliamentary plaything which they call "a private bill." Mr. Jeffco himself showed Mr. Franklin into his father's study. "My dear Franklin! why do you surprise me in this way? Anything wrong?" "Yes; something wrong with Rachel; I am dreadfully distressed about it." "Grieved to hear it. But I can't listen to you now." "When *can* you listen?" "My dear boy! I won't deceive you. I can listen at the end of the session, not a moment before. Good-night." "Thank you, sir. Good-night."

Such was the conversation, inside the study, as reported to me by Mr. Jeffco. The conversation, outside the study, was shorter still. "Jeffco, see what time the tidal train starts to-morrow morning?" "At six-forty, Mr. Franklin." "Have me called at five." "Going abroad, sir?" "Going, Jeffco, wherever the railway chooses to take me." "Shall I tell your father, sir?" "Yes; tell him at the end of the session."

The next morning Mr. Franklin had started for foreign parts. To what particular place he was bound, nobody (himself included) could presume to guess. We might hear of him next in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America. The chances were as equally divided as possible, in Mr. Jeffco's opinion, among the four quarters of the globe.

This news—by closing up all prospect of my bringing Limping Lucy and Mr. Franklin together—at once stopped any further progress of mine on the way to discovery. Penelope's belief that her fellow-servant had destroyed herself through unrequited love for Mr. Franklin Blake, was confirmed—and that was all. Whether the letter which Rosanna had left to be given to him after her death did, or did not, contain the confession which Mr. Franklin had suspected her of trying to make to him in her lifetime, it was impossible to say. It might be only a farewell word, telling nothing but the secret of her unhappy fancy for a person beyond her reach. Or it might own the whole truth about the strange proceedings in which Sergeant Cuff had detected her, from the time when the Moonstone was lost, to the time when she rushed to her own destruction at the Shivering Sand. A sealed letter it had been placed in Limping Lucy's hands, and a sealed letter it remained to me and to every one about the girl, her own parents included. We all suspected her of having been in the dead woman's confidence; we all tried to make her speak; we all failed. Now one, and now another, of the servants—still holding to the belief that Rosanna had stolen the Diamond and had hidden it—peered and poked about the rocks to which she had been traced, and peered and poked in vain. The tide ebbed, and the tide flowed; the summer went on, and the autumn came. And the Quicksand, which hid her body, hid her secret too.

The news of Mr. Franklin's departure from England on the Sunday morning, and the news of my lady's arrival in London with Miss Rachel on the Monday afternoon, had reached me, as you are aware, by the Tuesday's post. The Wednesday came, and brought nothing. The Thursday produced a second budget of news from Penelope.

My girl's letter informed me that some great London doctor had been consulted about her young lady, and had earned a guinea by remarking that she had better be amused. Flower-shows, operas, balls—there was a whole round of gaieties in prospect; and Miss Rachel, to her mother's astonishment, eagerly took to it all. Mr. Godfrey had called; evidently as sweet as ever on his cousin, in spite of the reception he had met with, when he tried his luck on the occasion of the birthday. To Penelope's great regret, he had been most graciously received, and had added Miss Rachel's name to one of his Ladies' Charities on the spot. My mistress was reported to be out of spirits, and to have held two long interviews with her lawyer. Certain speculations followed, referring to a poor relation of the family—one Miss Clack, whom I have mentioned in my account of the birthday dinner, as sitting next to Mr. Godfrey, and having a pretty taste in champagne. Penelope was astonished to find that Miss Clack had not called yet. She would surely not be long before she fastened herself on my lady as usual—and so forth, and so forth, in the way women have of girding at each other, on and off paper. This would not have been worth mentioning, I admit, but for one reason. I hear you are likely to be turned over to Miss Clack,

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after parting with me. In that case, just do me the favour of not believing a word she says, if she speaks of your humble servant.

On Friday, nothing happened—except that one of the dogs showed signs of a breaking-out behind the ears. I gave him a dose of syrup of buckthorn, and put him on a diet of pot-liquor and vegetables till further orders. Excuse my mentioning this. It has slipped in somehow. Pass it over, please. I am fast coming to the end of my offences against your cultivated modern taste. Besides, the dog was a good creature, and deserved a good physicking; he did indeed.

Saturday, the last day of the week, is also the last day in my narrative.

The morning's post brought me a surprise in the shape of a London newspaper. The hand-writing on the direction puzzled me. I compared it with the money-lender's name and address as recorded in my pocket-book, and identified it at once as the writing of Sergeant Cuff.

Looking through the paper eagerly enough, after this discovery, I found an ink-mark drawn round one of the police reports. Here it is, at your service. Read it as I read it, and you will set the right value on the Sergeant's polite attention in sending me the news of the day:

"LAMBETH.—Shortly before the closing of the court, Mr. Septimus Luker, the well-known dealer in ancient gems, carvings, intagli, &c. &c., applied to the sitting magistrate for advice. The applicant stated that he had been annoyed, at intervals throughout the day, by the proceedings of some of those strolling Indians who infest the streets. The persons complained of were three in number. After having been sent away by the police, they had returned again and again, and had attempted to enter the house on pretence of asking for charity. Warned off in the front, they had been discovered again at the back of the premises. Besides the annoyance complained of, Mr. Luker expressed himself as being under some apprehension that robbery might be contemplated. His collection contained many unique gems, both classical and oriental, of the highest value. He had only the day before been compelled to dismiss a skilled workman in ivory carving from his employment (a native of India, as we understood) on suspicion of attempted theft; and he felt by no means sure that this man and the street-jugglers of whom he complained, might not be acting in concert. It might be their object to collect a crowd, and create a disturbance in the street, and, in the confusion thus caused, to obtain access to the house. In reply to the magistrate, Mr. Luker admitted that he had no evidence to produce of any attempt at robbery being in contemplation. He could speak positively to the annoyance and interruption caused by the Indians, but not to anything else. The magistrate remarked that, if the annoyance were repeated, the applicant could summon the Indians to that court, where they might easily be dealt with under the Act. As to the valuables in Mr. Luker's possession, Mr. Luker himself must take the best measures for their safe custody. He would do well perhaps to communicate with the police, and to adopt such additional precautions as their experience might suggest. The applicant thanked his worship, and withdrew."

One of the wise ancients is reported (I forget on what occasion) as having recommended his fellow-creatures to "look to the end." Looking to the end of these pages of mine, and wondering for some days past how I should manage to write it, I find my plain statement of facts coming to a conclusion, most appropriately, of its own self. We have gone on, in this matter of the Moonstone, from one marvel to another; and here we end with the greatest marvel of all—namely, the accomplishment of Sergeant Cuff's three predictions in less than a week from the time when he had made them.

After hearing from the Yollands on the Monday, I had now heard of the Indians, and heard of the money-lender, in the news from London—Miss Rachel herself, remember, being also in London at the time. You see, I put things at their worst, even when they tell dead against my own view. If you desert me, and side with the Sergeant, on the evidence before you—if the only rational explanation you can see is, that Miss Rachel and Mr. Luker must have got together, and that the Moonstone must be now in pledge in the money-lender's house—I own I can't blame you for arriving at that conclusion. In the dark, I have brought you thus far. In the dark I am compelled to leave you, with my best respects.

Why compelled? it may be asked. Why not take the persons who have gone along with me, so far, up into those regions of superior enlightment in which I sit myself?

In answer to this, I can only state that I am acting under orders, and that those orders have been given to me (as I understand) in the interests of truth. I am forbidden to tell more in this narrative than I knew myself at the time. Or, to put it plainer, I am to keep strictly within the limits of my own experience, and am not to inform you of what other persons told me—for the very sufficient reason that you are to have the information from those other persons themselves, at first hand. In this matter of the Moonstone the plan is, not to present reports, but to produce witnesses. I picture to myself a member of the family reading these pages fifty years hence. Lord! what a compliment he will feel it, to be asked to take nothing on hearsay, and to be treated in all respects like a Judge on the Bench.

At this place, then, we part—for the present, at least—after long journeying together, with a companionable feeling, I hope, on both sides. The devil's dance of the Indian Diamond has threaded its way to London; and to London you must go after it, leaving me at the country-house. Please to excuse the faults of this composition—my talking so much of myself, and being too familiar, I am afraid, with you. I mean no harm; and I drink most respectfully (having just done dinner) to your health and prosperity, in a tankard of her ladyship's ale.

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May you find in these leaves of my writing, what Robinson Crusoe found in his Experience on the desert island—namely, "something to comfort yourselves from, and to set in the Description of Good and Evil, on the Credit Side of the Account."—Farewell.

THE END OF THE FIRST PERIOD.

CARABOBO.

Before leaving Valencia, that pearl of Venezuelan cities, I resolved to visit the field of Carabobo. The name is little familiar to English ears, yet here Bolivar fought the battle which decided the liberties of the South American republics, and here British valour achieved a victory which deserves to be recorded in bronze and marble.

The battle-field is situated about eighteen miles south of Valencia. As I foresaw it would take some time to examine the ground, besides four or five hours at least for going and returning, and as a tropical sun in August is not agreeable, I determined to drive rather than ride. "What easier!" exclaims my European sightseer. "Order a carriage, and the thing is done." Carriages, however, being non-existent in Valencia, I was obliged to make search for a roofed vehicle of any description. At last my choice was a nondescript, strongly suggestive of the disasters which shortly took place. Into this I mounted with two or three friends about six o'clock on the morning of the 29th of August, 186—. We all lit our cigars, gave the word to old Domingo the driver, and started with a shock that broke one of the traces, and enabled us to get well to the end of our first cigars before even leaving the door.

To say that the streets of Valencia are not adapted for wheels, is to speak in the mild form which the Greeks thought advisable in discoursing of anything preternaturally bad. On this principle, one might say that these streets are paved, just as the Furies were called Eumenides. I had made up my mind to be "jolted to a jelly," but another form of martyrdom was reserved for us. At the first turning there was a chasm, into which we were all but precipitated. At last we cleared it with a portentous jerk, but the triumph cost us so many fractures as to entail a delay which lasted through another cigar. We then got on pretty well through a street and a square, but only to find ourselves in a narrow lane, shelving laterally at an angle of thirty degrees, and full of holes and heaps of broken flagstones. Here we smashed the pole, and the driver went off for a fresh one, and did not return till we had consumed a third cigar.

The sun was already hot before we were off the stones. The road lay in the centre of a valley, which extended north and south as far as eye could reach, and was bounded to east and west by richly wooded ranges of mountains, some twenty miles apart, and from one thousand to five thousand feet high. This valley cuts at right angles the far narrower one in which Valencia is built. At its northern extremity is the Lake of Tacaragua, and thence to the field of Carabobo, a distance of twenty-eight miles, there is a succession of plantations, many of them uncultivated since the late war it is true, and now unprofitable to the owners, but not the less luxuriant and pleasing to the eye. Were it not for snakes, insects, a vertical sun, fever, and a too rank crop of liberty, this valley would be Paradise. So we thought, and, falling into a benignant humour, we exchanged civil words with all we met. These were, for the most part, ragged fellows driving mules or asses, or mounted on miserable jades of horses, yet the usual salutation by which they were addressed was, "Good morning, general;" "Good morning, doctor."

It was past ten o'clock A.M. before we got to a posada, which is the sole habitation near the Pass of Carabobo. The landlord was only a colonel, but in respectability of appearance he quite thrust several of the generals we had met into the shade. We asked what we could have for breakfast. Like innkeepers everywhere, he informed us we could have whatever we liked; but on our proceeding to name various desirable dishes, it turned out that none of them were forthcoming, and, in the end, we subsided into a meek acquiescence in eggs, which were, in truth, the only thing procurable. For this ovation, and two bottles of wretched wine of the country, the worthy colonel charged us only twenty-one shillings; so that we did not pay much more than a shilling an egg.

Having feasted after this fashion, we sallied forth to reconnoitre the locality in which the battle was fought. It was now past eleven, and the fierce sun made us appreciate what the combatants must have suffered from the heat on the memorable 24th of June, 1821. The English, at least, must have been sorely tried; but as for the natives, we had just then a proof of their powers of endurance, for a party of travellers went by, among whom were several girls, who had but a light mantilla drawn over their heads.

And here, after the fashion of the immortal Cervantes, it might be allowable to request the reader to suspend his interest in the battle of Carabobo, and turn aside to a lengthy episode in which could be related an adventure or love passage that befel one or other of our party then, or on some other occasion, or which it might be adroitly pretended that one of the said travellers, à propos or otherwise, recounted to us. But, to say truth, the sun was making havoc of my patience, and, so far from seeking matter for an episode, I besought the cicerone of the party to tell us all he knew, and to be brief about it, as I wanted to get under shelter again as fast as possible. The old general, however, had his own way of telling the story, and was not to be thwarted.

"You will never understand the battle," said he, "nor appreciate it, unless you know some-

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thing of the previous position of affairs. You see we had all been a good deal dissatisfied with Bolivar, who, on the 25th of November, 1820—the year before the battle—had concluded a truce for six months with the Spanish Captain-General Morillo. This took place at Santa Anna, a village in the province of Trujillo, to the west of Carabobo. It is true we got rid of Morillo by the armistice, for he went off to Spain as soon as it was signed; but he left La Torre, as good a general as himself, at the head of affairs, to say nothing of the famous Morales, who commanded the plundering hordes first raised by Yañez and Bores. And if Morales had not been a traitor, and La Torre had kept his forces together and prevented Bolivar from joining Paez, who was posted with three thousand men at Achaguas, in Apure, to the south of this, the issue of the struggle might have been different. But Bolivar was right. He no doubt knew that Morales was disaffected because he had not been appointed to succeed Morillo; and the armistice gave the patriots time to mature their plans and to seize some important places, such as Maracaibo, under cover of the truce."

"All which," I observed, "redounds, of course, very much to the honour of the said patriots, and is a proof of their love of truth and respect for treaties."

"I cannot but think," continued the general, disregarding my interruption, "that, with eleven thousand choice troops such as the Spanish general had—veterans trained in combats with the French, and in many a stubborn fight in this country—the victory might have been wrested from Bolivar, in spite of the thousand British bayonets that supported him. But La Torre, who lay at San Carlos, about one hundred miles to the south of this, was induced by Morales to send some of his best regiments to defend Carácas against Bermudez, one of our ablest officers, who marched on the capital from the east. Bermudez, after many successes, was utterly routed at last under the very walls of Carácas. But, in the mean time, Bolivar had joined Paez, and was advancing against La Torre with equal, if not superior, forces. His army, when united, was formed in three divisions. The first, commanded by General Paez, was composed of the Cazadores Britanicos, or 'British light infantry,' which was the remnant of the British Legion, or Elsam's Brigade, and now numbered not more than eight hundred men; one hundred of the Irish Legion attached to the English corps; the native regiment called the Bravos of Apure, eight hundred strong; and one thousand four hundred native cavalry; in all, three thousand one hundred men.

"The second division, commanded by General Cedeño, consisted of the regiments called Tiradores, Boyacá, and Vargas, and of the squadron Sagrado, commanded by Arismendi, in all about one thousand eight hundred men.

"The third division was commanded by Colonel Ambrosio Plaza, and consisted of the Rifles, a regiment officered by Englishmen, with Colonel Sandes at their head, and the three regiments Granaderos, Vencedor, and Anzuátegui, with one regiment of cavalry, under Colonel Rondon. The numerical strength of this division was, in round numbers, two thousand five hundred men.

"The soldiers of this force were the best in the country. As for our battalion, a great general, it is said, pronounced that Englishmen fight best when well fed, but Carabobo proved that British courage does not depend on food alone. In fact, we English were desperate men, and much in the same mind as that of our forefathers at Agincourt. We were without pay, wretchedly clothed, and with no rations but half-starved bull-beef, which we ate without salt, that being a luxury unknown in Apure. Life itself had become hateful to us, and the men had been driven by distress, not long before, into open mutiny. The zeal of the officers alone extinguished the revolt, but many of us were wounded in quelling it. Order was at last re-established, but after scenes which I do not care to recall. Add to this, our commanding officer, Brigadier Blosset, was killed in a duel with Power of the Irish Legion, and this latter corps, all but the hundred men who were attached to us, had mutinied, and, after sacking Rio-Hacha, had been shipped off to Jamaica.

"Well, to go back a little before coming to the battle. I must tell you that it was the 10th of May when our brigade, under Paez, removed from Achaguas, a strong position on the frontier, between the provinces of Apure and Carabobo. We had been stationed there to watch Morales, who lay at Calabozo, about a hundred miles to the north of us. As soon as he retreated on San Carlos we advanced, and passed through the city of Guanares to San Carlos, from which the enemy retired. There we were joined by Bolivar, with Cedeño's division, and halted four days to prepare for the battle which was now imminent. At this time an order was issued that we English should act independently of the regiment Apure with which we had hitherto been brigaded. This turned out to be a most fortunate occurrence.

"We had now been marching for more than a month, and had suffered terrible privations. We had had to cross the river Apurito, and numerous streams swarming with alligators and with that still more dangerous pest the Caribe fish, which, though no bigger than a perch, has teeth which will penetrate a coat of steel, and which, at the scent of blood, comes in such myriads, that the largest animals, and even the alligator itself, are eaten up by them in a moment. Some of our men had thus perished in the water, and others had died on the road from the bites of snakes and venomous reptiles. A far greater number fell victims to want, fatigue, and disease. In short, our sufferings had been such, that there was not a man of us that was not resolved to die, fighting, rather than retrace his steps.

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"The opportunity was at hand. On the 21st of June we marched from San Carlos, due east about a dozen miles, to the village of Tinaco. Our cavalry in advance, under Colonel Silva, had a sharp brush with the enemy, and brought in some prisoners. The same evening the third division, under Plaza, joined us, and brought up our strength to something over seven thousand. Next day, the 22nd, we pushed on due north, through the village of Tinnaquillo, and halted on the road to Carabobo, the enemy's outposts falling back before us, but not without sharp skirmishes.

"We had now the River Chirgua to cross, and then the defile of Buenavista. This is a formidable position, and if it had been occupied by the enemy we could hardly have forced it. Luckily, they had resolved on the Pass of Carabobo as the spot where they would give battle, so our advance on the 23rd was unopposed. That day, about noon, our vedettes came in sight of the Spanish army, and Bolivar halted us and formed us as if for the attack. Paez commanded the right, Cedeño the left, and Plaza had the centre. Bolivar then rode from left to right, and addressed each corps as he passed. His words were received by the others with silence, but when he had done speaking to the English, we gave him three hurrahs that were heard a mile off.

"It was only one P.M., but Bolivar determined to postpone the attack till next day, either to give us a rest, or because he thought it would be lucky to fight on San Juan's Day. We halted, therefore, and passed the night where we were. And such a night it was! The rain fell in torrents, and those of us who had been at Waterloo reminded one another that it was just the same there, and took it for a good omen.

"The weather in South America is always in extremes, and the sky was cloudless on the 24th, when we stood to arms. Our officers were grouped together, talking over the chances of the day, when an order came from Bolivar for the right division, in which we English were, to advance. It was now that the Creole regiment that was with us, called the Bravos of Apure, claimed to lead the attack. As a matter of right it belonged to us, we being the older corps, but considering the pretension on the part of natives of the country very natural, we conceded the point, and on they went. Our regiment followed, and then came the cavalry, under Paez, led by a squadron called Los Colorados, composed of two hundred supernumerary officers. The morning dawned bright and clear as we moved along the heights opposite the Spaniards. All was calm and still, as if Nature would contrast her peacefulness with the horrid uproar with which man was about to break in.

"We were moving to the west, to get round the enemy's right flank, if possible. We could see his guns and some of his infantry; but much of his force was hid by the trees and the broken ground, and a strong body of his men were posted in a ravine, where they were altogether out of sight. But it is time to point out to you his position. This road, by which we came from Valencia, is the high road to San Carlos. The ravine which you see there behind us, coming down to it from the south-east, is called the Manzana, or 'Apple' ravine. Behind that were the head-quarters of the Spanish army. Their forces were in position in front of the ravine, and on the right of the San Carlos road, their guns being on their left flank—on that hill which you see completely commands the road. Had we advanced along the road, our column would have been swept by their guns, and exposed to an attack in flank, which must have proved fatal. On the other hand, the ground on the extreme right of the Spaniards you see there," said the old general, pointing to a series of steep hills and deep ravines, "was quite impracticable for regular troops and cavalry. Bolivar, therefore, after reconnoitring the enemy for about a quarter of an hour, sent us orders to attack by the ravine, which, as you see, lies between the hill on which were the Spanish guns and their infantry. This ravine we found so deep, that, on descending into it, we lost sight of the regiment of Apure. Meantime, the enemy's guns had opened fire, and men began to fall in both the battalions of our brigade.

"The crest of the ravine was lined by the enemy. The ground on which they stood slopes gently towards the mouth of the ravine, which is so steep, that I, for one, was glad to catch hold of the tail of a horse ridden by an officer in front of me. Directly the Apure regiment had got out of the ravine and were beginning to deploy, the enemy's cavalry threatened to charge it, but, either through treachery or cowardice, retreated before our cavalry, who now passed us on our right and charged, but were in their turn driven back by the fire of the Spanish line. Meantime, the Apure Bravos had formed line and advanced to within pistol-shot of the Spaniards, when they received a murderous volley from more than three thousand muskets, besides the fire of the Spanish artillery. Overwhelmed with this storm of shot, the regiment wavered, then broke and fled back in headlong disorder upon us. It was a critical moment, but we managed to keep our ground till the fugitives had got through our ranks back into the ravine, and then our grenadier company, gallantly led by Captain Minchin, formed up and poured in their fire upon the Spaniards, who were only a few paces from them. Checked by this volley, the enemy fell back a little, while our men, pressing eagerly on, formed and delivered their fire company after company.

"Receding before our fire and the long line of British bayonets, the Spaniards fell back to the position from which they had rushed in pursuit of the Apure Bravos. But from thence they kept up a tremendous fire upon us, which we returned as rapidly as we could. As they outnumbered us in the ratio of four to one, and were strongly posted and supported by guns,

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we waited for reinforcements before storming their position. Not a man, however, came to help us, and after an hour passed in this manner our ammunition failed. It then really seemed to be all over with us. We tried, as best we could, to make signals of our distress; the men kept springing their ramrods, and Colonel Thomas Ferrier, our commanding officer, apprised General Paez of our situation, and called on him to get up a supply of cartridges. It came at last; but by this time many of our officers and men had fallen, and among them Colonel Ferrier. You may imagine we were not long in breaking open the ammunition-boxes; the men numbered off anew, and after delivering a couple of volleys we prepared to charge. At this moment our cavalry, passing as before by our right flank, charged, with General Paez at their head. They went on very gallantly, but soon came galloping back and passed again to our rear, without having done any execution on the enemy, while they had themselves suffered considerably.

"Why Bolivar at this time, and indeed during the period since our first advance, sent us no support, I have never been able to guess. Whatever the motive, it is certain that the second and third divisions of the army quietly looked on while we were being slaughtered, and made no attempt to help us. The curses of our men were loud and deep, but seeing that they must not expect any help, they made up their minds to carry the enemy's position, or perish. Out of nine hundred men we had not above six hundred left; Captain Scott, who succeeded Colonel Ferrier, had fallen, and had bequeathed the command to Captain Minchin; and the colours of the regiment had seven times changed hands, and had been literally cut to ribands, and dyed with the blood of the gallant fellows who carried them. But, in spite of all this, the word was passed to charge with the bayonet, and on we went, keeping our line as steadily as on a parade day, and with a loud hurrah we were upon them. I must do the Spaniards the justice to say they met us gallantly, and the struggle was for a brief time fierce, and the event doubtful. But the bayonet in the hands of British soldiers, more especially such a forlorn hope as we were, is irresistible. The Spaniards, five to one as they were, began to give ground, and at last broke and fled.

"Then it was, and not till then, that two companies of the Tiradores came up to our help, and our cavalry, hitherto of little use, fiercely pursued the retreating enemy. What followed I tell you on hearsay from others, for I was now stretched on the field with two balls through my body. I know, however, that the famous battalion of royalists called 'Valence,' under their gallant colonel Don Tomas Garcia, covered the enemy's retreat, and was never broken. Again and again this noble regiment turned sullenly on its pursuers, and successfully repulsed the attacks of the cavalry and infantry of the third division of our army, which now for the first time left their secure position and pursued the Spaniards.

"It was at this period of the battle that General Cedeño, stung by a rebuke from Bolivar, quitted the third division, which he was commanding, and at the head of a small body of followers charged the regiment 'Valence,' and found, with all his comrades, the honourable death they sought. So fell 'the bravest of the brave of Columbia.' Plaza also, who commanded the second division, was killed, and also Mellao, another famous hero of the patriots. As for our regiment, it had been too severely handled to join in the pursuit with much vigour. Two men out of every three were killed or wounded. Besides Colonel Ferrier, Lieutenant-Colonel Davy, Captain Scott, Lieutenants Church, Houston, Newel, Stanley, and several others, whose names I forget, were killed; and Captains Minchin and Smith, Lieutenants Hubble, Matthew, Hand, Talbot, and others, were wounded. The remains of the corps passed before the Liberator with trailed arms at double-quick, and received with a cheer, but without halting, his words, 'Salvadores de mi patria!'—Saviours of my country.

"On getting across the bridge you see there, the enemy made an effort to retrieve the day, and opened fire with the guns still left to them. Our men then charged, took one of the guns, and got across the bridge, when they had to form square to repel some squadrons of cavalry that attacked them. Our well-directed fire soon broke them, and the rout now became general. The battalion 'Valence' alone maintained the order of its ranks all the way to Valencia, baffling for eighteen miles the unceasing attacks of our cavalry. Under the walls of Valencia itself it was, for the last time, charged by the rifles and the grenadiers of Bolivar's Guard, mounted on horseback by order of the Liberator. In this final conflict the gallant Spaniards continued unbroken, and were no further molested, but reaching at ten P.M. the foot of the mountains, they made good their retreat to Puerto Cabello to the number of nine hundred men.

"All the rest of the Spanish army was completely dissolved, and Carácas, the capital, La Guaira, and the other towns still in the hands of the royalists, at once surrendered. In short, the independence of Columbia was achieved by the battle of Carabobo; and that the victory was entirely owing to the English is proved by the fact that they lost six hundred men out of nine hundred, while all the rest of Bolivar's army, amounting to more than six thousand men, lost but two hundred!"

The old general here concluded his harangue. We then ascended the hill on which the Spanish guns were planted, examined the deep ravine through which the English had passed to the attack, and the slope on which the Spaniards had been drawn up, and returned to Valencia

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impressed with the belief that the English soldier had never better maintained his reputation than at Carabobo.

THE WRECK OF THE POCAHONTAS.

I LIT the lamps in the lighthouse tower,
For the sun dropped down and the day was dead;
They shone like a glorious clustered flower,
Ten golden and five red.

Looking across, where the line of coast
Stretched darkly, shrinking away from the sea,
The lights sprang out at its edge, almost
They seemed to answer me!

O warning lights, burn bright and clear,
Hither the storm comes! Leagues away
It moans and thunders low and drear,—
Burn till the break of day!

Good night! I called to the gulls that sailed
Slow past me through the evening sky;
And my comrades, answering shrilly, hailed
Me back with boding cry.

A mournful breeze began to blow,
Weird music it drew through the iron bars,
The sullen billows boiled below,
And dimly peered the stars;

The sails that flecked the ocean floor
From east to west leaned low and fled;
They knew what came in the distant roar
That filled the air with dread!

Flung by a fitful gust, there beat
Against the window a dash of rain,—
Steady as tramp of marching feet
Strode on the hurricane.

It smote the waves for a moment still,
Level and deadly white for fear;
The bare rock shuddered,—an awful thrill
Shook even my tower of cheer.

Like all the demons loosed at last,
Whistling and shrieking, wild and wide,
The mad wind raged, and strong and fast
Rolled in the rising tide.

And soon in ponderous showers the spray,
Struck from the granite, reared and sprung,
And clutched at tower and cottage grey,
Where overwhelmed they clung

Half drowning, to the naked rock;
But still burned on the faithful light,
Nor faltered at the tempest's shock,
Through all the fearful night.

Was it in vain? That knew not we.
We seemed, in that confusion vast,
Of rushing wind and roaring sea,
One point whereon was cast

The whole Atlantic's weight of brine.
Heaven help the ship should drift our way!
No matter how the light might shine
Far on into the day.

When morning dawned, above the din
Of gale and breaker boomed a gun!
Another! We, who sat within,
Answered with cries each one.

Into each other's eyes with fear
We looked, through helpless tears, as still,
One after one, near and more near,
The signals pealed, until

The thick storm seemed to break apart,
To show us, staggering to her grave,
The fated brig. We had no heart
To look, for naught could save.

One glimpse of black hull heaving slow,
Then closed the mists o'er canvas torn
And tangled ropes, swept to and fro
From masts that raked forlorn.

Weeks after, yet ringed round with spray,
Our island lay, and none might land;
Though, blue, the waters of the bay
Stretched calm on either hand.

And when at last from the distant shore
A little boat stole out, to reach
Our loneliness, and bring once more
Fresh human thought and speech,

We told our tale, and the boatmen cried:
"'Twas the Pocahontas—all were lost!
For miles along the coast, the tide
Her shattered timbers tost."

Then I looked the whole horizon round,—
So beautiful the ocean spread
About us, o'er those sailors drowned!
"Father in heaven," I said,

A child's grief struggling in my breast,
"Do purposeless thy creatures meet
Such bitter death? How was it best
These hearts should cease to beat?

"Oh, wherefore! Are we nought to Thee?
Like senseless weeds that rise and fall
Upon thine awful sea, are we
No more then, after all?"

And I shut the beauty from my sight,
For I thought of the dead that lay below.
From the bright air faded the warmth and light,
There came a chill like snow.

Then I heard the far-off note resound,
Where the breakers slow and slumberous rolled,
And a subtle sense of Thought profound
Touched me with power untold.

And like a voice eternal spake,
That wondrous rhythm, and "Peace, be still,"
It murmured; "bow thy head, and take
Life's rapture and life's ill,

"And wait. At last all shall be clear."
The long, low, mellow music rose
And fell, and soothed my dreaming ear
With infinite repose.

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Sighing, I climbed the lighthouse stair,
Half forgetting my grief and pain;
And while the day died, sweet and fair,
I lit the lamps again.

POISON OF THE RATTLESNAKE.

The animal kingdom adds but two active poisons to the numberless fatal agents which form in bark and seed, or get new birth by annual dozens from the chemist's laboratory.

These two animal poisons are furnished by the race of venomous serpents and by the toad, whose ancient and evil reputation modern toxicology has finally justified by discovering in the mucus of his skin a deadly and rapid poison. The other animal substances which injure, we may pass over here, because the venom of the centipede or the scorpion is rarely fatal, and at all events is not to be compared to the potent material which the rattlesnake, cobra, or viper deals out to its victim.

The venom of the serpent is certainly one of the most powerful of all the poisons; and it therefore strikes us as strange, that, for devilish devices to kill, men have plundered vegetable and mine, but have left to the serpent untouched his death-giving juices. So far is this from the popular belief, that venom has been for ages supposed to form part of certain famous poisons, and within a few years it was thought to be the chief ingredient in the well-known arrow poison of South America. The symptoms of venomtoxication are, however, distinct. It only injures when placed under the skin or deep in the tissues, and it is absolutely as harmless as bread when swallowed. To have been used by the poisoner it must, therefore, have been lodged in the tissues—a difficult task; and we should have then found related a certain set of symptoms which would be unmistakable as evidence of the character of the poison. No such histories exist; and the doubtful case of the Queen of Egypt is the only one where the venom of the serpent figures upon the pages of historic poisonings.

The savage has been equally unwilling or unable to employ venom; and the various poisons with which he arms his spear or dart—such as the upas of the East, and the various wooraras of South America and the Isthmus—are all found to be of vegetable origin, and to act differently from the poisons yielded by the snakes of the various countries in question.

It is to be presumed that the non-employment of a poison so fatal and so widely diffused has been due to the difficulty of securing it in quantity, and to the world-wide dread of serpents, rather than to any other cause. Such sentiments may have had something to do with the scientific neglect which so long left these poisons to be the subject of a hundred fabulous tales, while other and far less interesting poisons have been studied over and over with never-ending care and patience. Not, however, that this has been the only reason. Science is fearless, and carries untrembling her all-revealing torch, with little regard to the fears and prejudices which check the steps of those who are not her followers and priests. But in Europe, where investigators are abundant, poisonous serpents are small and rare; whilst in lands where the snake exists in hideous plenty, the experimental toxicologist is rarely found, or lacks the means to carry on his pursuits. In Europe, also, the added interest which once belonged to the subject on account of the number of serpents has lessened with their gradual extinction; and, as man has not himself employed this poison, it has also wanted the fascination belonging to agents which, having once figured in some famous poisoning case, never again fail of interesting the chemist and toxicologist, who sets about at once to discover antidotes and detective tests for each rare poison, as in turn it makes good this horrible claim to be so considered. In this way the great Palmer case brought about the most careful study of both strychnia and tartar emetic; while the equally infamous Boccarmé poisoning in Belgium led to a thorough investigation of nicotine, which for the first time made its appearance upon the annals of crime.

Lacking this kind of interest, but surrounded by a haze of the strangest popular beliefs, the serpent venom got no fair examination until the researches of Francisco Redi, whose essay, originally in Italian, 1669, is now before me in Latin form, Amsterdam, 1675; a small volume of Experimenta circa res diversas naturales, speciatim illas, quæ ex Indiis ad feruntur. On the title-page, a buxom figure of Science receives gifts from a plumed Indian with a crocodile comfortably bestowed under his arm. Charas, a better observer, wrote soon after Redi His work, entitled New Experiments upon Vipers, with exquisite Remedies, etc., now rendered into English, London, 1673, set at rest many popular fallacies, and prepared the way for the more elaborate research made by the well-known Felix Fontana, and first published in Lucca in 1767. Of this remarkable toxicological study it is difficult to speak too highly. Resting upon at least three thousand experiments on all classes of animals, it displays an amount of industry and scientific sagacity which have been rarely equalled. A short chemical paper by Lucien Bonaparte, and scattered records of cases of poisoning, comprise nearly all that has been added to the subject, so far as concerns the viper. In the East Indies, Russell and Davy have since experimented with the venom of the cobra, and Dr. Rufz has given us an excellent account of the dreaded vipère fer de lance of Martinique, while in America the toxicology of the rattlesnake and copperhead have been studied of late with every advantage which the most modern methods could give. From these researches collectively we are able to offer a sketch of the toxicology of snake poisons which will at least approach in completeness that which can be given of any of the best-known and more accessible poisons.

The United States possess but three kinds of

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poisonous serpents, known in popular language as rattlesnake, copperhead, and moccasin. The first of these having been the chief subject of study, we premise by stating that nearly all of our statements refer to this serpent. As a poisoner it ranks side by side with the cobra and vipère fer de lance, and probably above the copperhead and the moccasin. In fact, all that we know at present leads us to believe that the venom of all serpents is alike in toxic character, and only differs in degree of virulence and in amount; so that what we gather as to the chemical and other qualities of the venom of any one serpent may, as a rule, be said to apply alike to all of this terrible family.

The rattlesnake, as every one knows, gets his name from the curious jointed appendix to the tail by which the hunter becomes aware of his neighbourhood. We have seen one of these sets of rattles numbering eighteen joints, another thirty-six; which, if the vulgar notion be correct, would allot to the owner just so many years of life. We have known, however, three of these joints to form in forty summer days; so that it is probable the larger snakes might carry them by dozens, if they were not so brittle as constantly to be broken off and lost.

The attitude of a large rattlesnake when you come suddenly upon him is certainly one of the finest things to be seen in American forests. The vibrating tail projects from coils formed by about half the length of the snake, while the neck, lifted a few inches, is held in curves, the head perfectly steady, the eyes dull and leaden, the whole posture bold and defiant, and expressive of alertness and inborn courage.

Let us tease this gallant-looking reptile with a switch. He has power to throw his head forward only about one-third to one-half the length of his whole body, so that our game is safe enough. Sometimes he will strike at the stick; usually he reserves his forces, judging wisely as to his own powers. At last, when he finds that he is getting nothing by pluck and endurance, he turns his head, and, unrolling coil from coil, glides away, not very swiftly, ready at a moment to coil anew, as a regiment forms square to receive a charge. If, as he glides along, you can seize his tail, and quickly enough lift him from the earth, holding him at arm's length, he will be utterly unable to return on your hand or to reach your body, having none of the great physical force of his cousins, the constrictors. If, while on the ground, in any posture, coiled or not, you seize his tail, that deadly head will return upon you with a swiftness which seems as though you had touched some releasing spring in a piece of quick machinery; so that there is no truth in the notion that the snake can strike only when coiled. The awful celerity of this movement is in odd contrast to the sluggish pace of most of his actions, which are sadly deceptive, and have cost more than one man his life. Hundreds of times have we seen this swift motion, and as often marvelled at the simplicity and certainty of the means which drove the relentless, death-laden head to its mark. Let us look a moment at the rest of the apparatus, and then we shall the easier understand how all the parts unite in functional activity so as to give to this horrible instrument the same efficiency which Nature has secured for her other and more seemingly useful purposes.

The laboratory in which the serpent makes his potent medicine is an almond-shaped gland behind the eye, on either side of the upper jaw. It looks like an ordinary salivary gland, and is merely a mass of minute tubes surrounded by little sacs or cells, only to be seen by a microscope. Here the venom forms, and thence reaches a larger tube at the lower side of the gland. This is the only poison-sac. It communicates with a tube or duct about the size of a steel knitting-needle, which runs forward under the eye, and then around the front of the upper jaw, where it has a slight enlargement made up of muscular fibres, so arranged as to keep the duct shut and to cork up the poison until a greater power overcomes the resistance. The anterior bone of the serpent's upper jaw is double—one for each side. It is an irregular truncated pyramid; apex down, and hollowed, so that in it rests the stout base of the fang. This exquisite instrument is merely a hollow tooth, curved backwards like the bend of a sabre, with a little forward turn at the tip, which is itself solid, for strength's sake, and as sharp as the finest needle. About a line below this point, on the front aspect, there is a minute opening. If we run into this a bristle, it will appear at the base of the tooth, just where the tube leading from the gland lies against the fang, and is held to it by the folds of tissue which lie in the gums. When unused, the two fangs, with their supporting bone, in which they are rigidly fixed, are drawn backwards, and lie, covered by a cloak of mucous tissue, one on each side upon the roof of the snake's mouth. A second muscle is so attached to the maxillary bone as to be able to erect it, together with the fang, which, when thus ready for use, projects downwards into the open mouth, its convexity forwards.

Thus placed, it is at the utmost disadvantage; and this is only in part overcome by the backward bending of the head and the extreme opening of the mouth at the moment of the bite. Lastly, let us understand that two powerful muscles fastened to the upper bones of the head run over the venom gland, and then are attached, one on each side, to the lower jaw. Let these muscles shorten and two things result—the jaws close on the body bitten, and, the gland being abruptly squeezed, the venom flies along the tube of exit, through the basal opening of the fang, and out at the orifice near its tip.

It will be easy now to understand how this wonderful machinery moves in sequence to its deadly result. You have come a little too near this coiled death. Instantly the curves of the projecting neck are straightened, half a ring of the coil flashes out with it, and the head is

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thrust at the opposing flesh, the bulk of the body serving as an anchor. As it moves, the neck bends back, the mouth opens wide, the fangs are unsheathed and held stiffly, and you have a sharp pang as the points enter the skin. Quick as thought the lower jaw shuts on the part, deeper go the fangs, and, the same muscle which closes the jaw compressing the glands, the venom is injected among the tissues which the fangs have pierced. Of late the doctors have taken to administering medicines by a very similar process, which has been found to combine economy in the amount of medicine needed with the utmost efficiency as to results. This instrument is merely a hollow needle, through which the medicine is forced by a syringe. I wish I could say that the hint was taken from the snake, so much of a plea might have been put forward for his abused race.

It sometimes chances that, despite all this exquisite machinery, some little failure occurs, which may be taken as a desirable piece of good luck for the person aimed at. For instance, the teeth may strike at a disadvantage, and be suddenly doubled backwards, whereupon the venom occasionally goes down the snake's throat, and, as we shall see, does him no such harm as drugs usually do the apothecary; or it chances that, the sequence of actions failing as to their due order, the venom is ejected before the fang enters, or escapes at the base of the tooth on account of the duct not being drawn neatly upon the aperture of the tooth.

Let these incidents occur, and at the same time let the sharp and hooked teeth of the lower jaw wound the skin, and we shall have all the material for a case of rattlesnake bite, in which we may administer an antidote with great surety of success. A snake strikes you, the skin is wounded, and the conclusion is naturally drawn that you are also poisoned; whereas both in man and animals, as we have seen many times, the victim may drag the snake some distance, hung to the tissues by the harmless little hooked teeth of the lower jaw.

It is also a matter of moment whether, being bitten, you have received two fang-wounds or only one, because the two glands are as independent of one another as two rival drug-shops; and, if you get both fangs in you, the dose of the venom is twice what it would be if only one of them entered. Luckily, it often chances that, in small members like the fingers, one tooth goes aside of the mark, and so fails of its purpose, thus lessening the risk exactly one half.

These keenly tempered fangs are liable to be lost by accidents, and also to fall by natural decay. When the former occurs, the snake is unarmed for the time; but in a few days a reserve fang—which always lies behind or to one side of the active tooth—becomes firmly set in its socket, and comes into apposition with the opening of the duct. It is therefore not enough to pull out the active fang, since numerous others lie ready for use in the gum behind it. A young friend once showed me a small rattlesnake, from which he had taken the active fangs three months before, supposing the reptile thus disarmed for life. He was accustomed to handle it freely, and had never been bitten. On opening the mouth, I pointed out to him the new and efficient teeth which had taken the place of those he had removed. How much danger he thus ran it were hard to say, since the snake may be handled with impunity, if care be taken not to hurt it or to use abrupt motions.

A very startling incident illustrative of this occurred some years ago in Philadelphia. A tavern-keeper had in a box two large rattlesnakes, perfectly wild, and not long captives. Coming into his bar-room early one morning, he found his little daughter, about six years old, seated beside the open snake-box, with both serpents lying in her lap. He was wise enough, seeing her unhurt, to ask how they got out, and hearing, in reply, that she herself had lifted them from the box, he ordered her to replace them, which she did without harm, finally closing upon them the lid of their cage. Snakes long confined very often become so tame that, as we have found, they will allow mice, reed-birds, or pigeons in their cage without attempting to injure them. If any still doubt that the rattlesnake may be handled with impunity, the experience of the naturalist Waterton may end his doubt. His biographer describes him as seizing and holding poisonous serpents with an indifference which is only credible to those who have studied their habits with care. We are persuaded, however, that certain snakes are more likely to strike than others, some requiring the utmost provocation. This is very apt to be the case after the serpent has bitten a few times vainly upon a stick or other hard body; so that it seems probable, not only that the snake has memory, but that individuality may exist in forms of life even as low as this one. Where in the descending scale does this cease? Are there clever earthworms and stupid earthworms—no two things anywhere precisely the same?

Let us now pursue our inquiry, see how we may get the venom for study, and what physically and chemically this marvellous liquid may be.

Many ways of handling the serpent were tried before one was found simple and safe enough. While the complicated methods were used some narrow escapes were made, until at last we hit on a plan which answered every purpose. A stick five feet long, cut square at the end, was fitted with a thin leather strap two inches wide, tacked on to one side of the end, and then carried over it and through a staple on the other side, where it was attached to a stout cord. Pulling this leather out into a loop, and leaning over the snake-cage, which is five feet deep and now open above, we try to noose one of the snakes. This has been done so often as to be difficult. At first, when it was slipped over their heads, they crawled forward through it; now always they have learned

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to draw-back on its approach. At last one is taken, the leathern strap is drawn tight around his neck by pulling the cord, and is kept so near to the head that he cannot turn to bite the stick, if the pressure should provoke his wrath. Thus secured, we lift him from his dozen of friends, and, holding the noose firm, so as to keep him well squeezed against the end of the stick, we put him on a table. Next, resigning the staff and string to an assistant, we open the snake's mouth, and, with the edge of a little saucer, catch and elevate the two fangs. This is an old snake, milked often before, and now declining to bite unless compelled. Holding the saucer in one hand we seize the snake's head over the venom gland, and, with a thumb and forefinger, press the venom forward through the duct. Suddenly a clear yellow fluid flows out of the fangs. This is the venom. The snake is four feet long, untouched for two weeks, and has given us about twenty drops of poison. The assistant replaces him in his cage, and we turn to look at the famous poison which a living animal carries unharmed in his tissues for the deadly hurting of whom it may concern. There is some of this fluid in a phial on the table before me, and here some of it dried for three years—a scaly, yellow, shining matter, like dried white of egg, and as good to kill as ever it was. No smell, if fresh; no taste; faintly acid, and chemically a substance which is so nearly like this very white of egg that no chemical difference may be made between them. Two things so alike and so unlike! Indeed, it seems hardly fair of Nature to set us such problems. We fall back upon an imagined difference in the molecular composition of the two—very consoling, no doubt; but, after all, the thing is bewildering, explain it as we may. We would like not to believe it. We think of poisons as unlike what they hurt. Let us take from a dog's veins a little blood, keep it a few hours in the open air, and throw it back into his circulation, and very surely you have given him his death. Ugly facts of disease, where the body gets up its own poisons for home use, make the wonder less to the doctor; but even now to him it must still seem wonderful, this little bit of white of egg to nourish, and this, to no human test differing in composition, good for destroying alone.

It was once thought that the poison ceased to be such when not injected by the maker. Fontana disproved this, and so we may safely use it in our researches as we get it from the snake, with the great advantage of knowing what dose we administer. Let us now study the symptoms which this poison produces, and then learn, if possible, how it acts, and on what organs; because, as modern science has shown, all poisons have their especial organs, or sets of organs, upon which chiefly their destructive influence falls. This sort of analytic separation of the effects of poisons is always difficult, and never more so than as regards venom.

Rattlesnake poison is not fatal to all life. You cannot kill a crotalus with its own venom, nor with that of another. Neither can you poison a plant with venom. And, in fact, if you manage the experiment cleverly, canary-seed may be made to sprout from a mixture of venom and water.

We have seen, too, that the serpent often swallows his own poison. As for him, if it will not hurt being put under his skin, the wonder of its not injuring him when swallowed is little enough. It only excites amazement when we learn that it poisons no creature if ingested. We have fed pigeons with it, day after day, in doses each enough to have killed forty had it been put within the tissues. Placed in the stomach, it lies within some thousandths of an inch of the blood-vessels, only a thinnest mucous membrane between; and here it is harmless, and there it means death. Let us follow this problem, as has lately been done. Why does it not poison? We give a pigeon fifty drops of venom, which, otherwise used, would kill a hundred, and that surely. For three days we collect all the excretæ, and then, killing the bird, remove with care the contents of the intestinal canal. Knowing well what fluids dissolve the venom, we separate by this means whatever poison may be present from all the rest of the substances passed by or taken from the bird. Then, with the fluid thus obtained, we inject the tissues of pigeons. No injury follows; our poison has gone. But where, and how? Let us mix a little of it with gastric juice, and keep it at body-heat for an hour. It still poisons; but we learn at length, after many essays, that very long digesting of it in constantly added quantities of gastric juice does change it somewhat; and so, as we do not find it in the excretæ, we come to think that, being what we call an albuminoid, it is very likely to be altered during digestion, and so rendered innocent enough, it may be. Here, at last, we must rest, having learned, first, that venom will not pass through the mucous surfaces; and, second, that it undergoes such change in digestion as to make it harmless. In these peculiarities it stands alone, if we except certain putrefying substances which may usually be swallowed without injury, but slowly kill if placed under the skin.

As regards also the mode in which venom is hurtful to animal life, this potent agent is altogether peculiar. Let us examine a single case. We inject through a hollow needle two drops of venom under the skin of a pigeon. On a sudden, within a minute, it is dead, without pang or struggle; and the tissues, when examined, reveal no cause of death. The fatal result is rarely so speedy; but here, as with all poisons, personal peculiarities count for a good deal, and one animal will die in a minute from a dose which another may resist for hours. We repeat the experiment, using only half a drop. In a few minutes the bird staggers, and at last crouches, too feeble to walk. The feebleness increases, vomiting occurs, the breathing becomes laboured, the head falls, a slight convulsion follows, and the pigeon is dead. This is all we see—merely a strange intense weakness.

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Before trying to explain it, we shall do well to watch that which takes place when a larger animal, surviving the first effects, perishes after a few hours or days. Here is a record of such a case. A large dog, poisoned with five drops of venom, lives over the first few hours of feebleness, and then begins to show a new set of symptoms. Some horrible malady of the blood and tissues has come upon him, so that the vital fluid leaks from the kidneys or the bowels, and oozes from the gums. The fang-wounds bleed, and a prick of a needle will drip blood for hours. Thus exhausted, he dies, or slowly recovers. Meanwhile, the wound made by the injecting needle or the fang has undergone a series of changes, which, rightly studied, gave the first clue to the true explanation of how this hideous agent acts.

A large and growing tumour marks where the needle entered. We cut into it. There is no inflammation at first; the whole mass is fluid blood, which by and by soaks every tissue in the neighbourhood, and even stains the bones themselves. If, for the sake of contrast, we wound any healthy part with a common needle, without venom, we open thus a few small blood-vessels, which presently cease to bleed, because the escaped blood quickly clots, and so corks their open mouths by a rarely failing providence of all-thoughtful Nature. The conclusion seems easy, that the venom destroys the power of the blood to clot, and so deprives the animal of this exquisite protection against hæmorrhage. If the creature live long and the dose be heavy, the collected blood putrefies, abscesses form, and more or less of the tissue becomes gangrenous. Nor is this evil only local. The venom absorbed from the wound enters the circulation, and soon the whole mass of the blood has lost power to clot when drawn. We are not willing to assert that this is a putrefactive change; but it is certainly in that direction, because this blood, if drawn, will now decay faster than other blood. By and by it begins to leak through the various tissues, and we find blood escaped out of the vessels and into the brain, lungs, or intestinal walls, giving in each case specific symptoms, according to the part injured and the function disturbed.

A further step has of late been gained towards comprehending this intricate problem. A young rabbit was made senseless and motionless with chloroform. Then its abdomen was opened, and a piece of the delicate membrane which holds the intestines was laid under the microscope, and kept moist by an assistant. The observer's eye looked down upon a wild racing of myriad blood-discs through the tiny vessels of the transparent membrane. Presently the assistant puts a drop of venom upon the tissue we are studying. For thirty seconds there is no change. Then suddenly a small vessel, giving way, is hidden by a rush of blood-discs. A little way off another vessel breaks, then a third, and a fourth, until within five minutes the field of view is obscured by blood, which at last causes a rupture in the delicate membrane between whose double folds the vessels run to and from the intestine. We are now as near to the centre of the maze as we are likely to come: nearer than we have come with most poisons. We have learned that this bland, tasteless venom has the subtle power to forbid the blood to clot, and in some strange way to pass through the tissues, and to soften and destroy the little blood-vessels, so that they break under the continuing force of the heart-pump.

The same phenomena may be seen on the surface of an open wound treated with venom; and that which happens in the wound, and, in the experiment just described, goes on at last everywhere in the body, so that in dozens of places vessels break down, while the blood is powerless to check its own wasteful outflow, as it would have done in health.

We have dwelt so long upon the symptoms of the protracted cases of snake-bite as to have lost sight for a time of the smaller class of sufferers, who perish so suddenly as to forbid us to explain their deaths by the facts which seem so well to cover the chronic cases. These speedily fatal results are uncommon in man, but in small animals are very frequent.

It is common to see pigeons die within ten minutes, and in these instances no trace of alteration can be found in the blood or solid tissues. Upon considering, therefore, the two sets of cases, it seems pretty clear that the venom has, besides its ability to alter the blood and enfeeble the vessels, some direct power to injure the great nerve-centres which preside over locomotion, respiration, and the heart's action.

To describe the experimental method by which these conclusions were reached would demand the space of another article, and involve a full explanation of the modern means of studying the effects of poisons; so that for this reason we must beg the reader to accept the proposition without being troubled with the proof.

It were well if the record of horrors ended with the death or the recovery; but in countries where poisonous snakes are abundant and cases of bite numerous, it is not uncommon to find that persons who survive become the victims of blindness, skin disorders, and various forms of palsy.

Fortunately the average snake-bite, even in India or Martinique, is far less fatal than was once believed; so that even dogs, when bitten, are by no means sure to die. Thus, of nine so treated on one occasion, only three perished; while among the eighty cases of venom poisoning in man recorded in American medical journals up to 1861 we have but four deaths. This unlooked-for result is due chiefly to the fact, that the danger is directly as the amount of venom, and that the serpent, unless very large and long at rest, or in captivity, can rarely command enough to kill a man. Once aware of these facts, it is easy to see why so many remedies got credit as antidotes in a disease supposed to be fatal, and in reality not at all so.

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Among the most absurd of the tales which rest on the common belief that a mere prick of a venomed fang may kill, is that of the farmer who was stung by a snake, which not only slew him, but left its fang in the fatal boots, which, falling to his descendants, proved fatal to two of them also. This story is to be traced to its original in the "Letters of an American Farmer," by St. John (de Crèvecœur), where it loses none of the piquancy of the later versions.

The reader will by this time understand that it is impossible the mere wound of the dry fang could destroy three persons in succession, so that we may confidently dismiss this tale to the limbo of other snake stories.

A few words must suffice to tell all we know as to the proper treatment. There are in America at least a hundred supposed antidotes, and in Martinique about as many. It is an old saying of a wise doctor, that diseases, for which there are numerous remedies, are either very mild or very fatal. Taking the mass of cases of snake-bite in America, few die; and this is why, as we said before, all means seem good alike. Tested fairly, where the dose of venom has been large, they are all alike worthless—a beautiful subject for the medical statistician.

Looked at with an eye to symptoms, we see in the first effects of venom a dangerous depression of all functions, exactly like what follows an over-dose of tartar emetic. The obvious treatment is to stimulate the man, and this is the meaning of whisky for snake-bite—a remedy, by the way, which enormously increased the number of snake-bites in the army on the American frontier. The intensity of the depression is shown best by the amount of whisky which may then be taken with impunity. In one case, a well-known physician of Tamaqua, Pennsylvania, gave to a child aged two years a pint of whisky in two hours. A little girl of nine years old in South Carolina received thus a pint and a half of whisky in four hours. Neither patient was made drunk by these doses, and both recovered.

It is likely that too much whisky is often given in such cases, since all that is desirable is to keep the person generally stimulated, and not to make him drunk. Nor does stimulus destroy the venom—it only antagonises its activity, as is best shown by mixing venom with alcohol, and then injecting the mixture under the skin, when the subject of the experiment will die, just as if no alcohol had been used.

As to local treatment, whatever gets the venom out of the tissues is good. Cross-cut the wound through the fang-marks, and suck at it with cups or with the mouth, if you like the bitten person well enough. Cut the piece out, if the situation allows of that, or burn it with a red-hot iron—milder caustics being mostly valueless. One other measure has real utility. Tie a broad band around the limb above the bite, so as to stop the pulse. Now give whisky enough to strengthen the heart. Let us then relax the band, and so connect again the circulation of the bitten part with the general system. The poison, before in quarantine, is let loose; the pulse becomes fast and feeble. We tighten the band, and give more liquor. The principle is this: You have ten men to fight, and you open the door wide enough just to let in one at a time. So much of the venom as your local treatment leaves in the tissues has to be admitted to the general system soon or late; we so arrange as to let it in a little at a time, and are thus able to fight it in detail.

Stripped utterly of its popular surroundings, and told in the plainest language, the mere scientific story of the venom of the rattlesnake is full of a horrible fascination, such as to some degree envelops the history of all poisons. One would like to know who first among the early settlers encountered the reptile, and what that emigrant thought of the original inhabitant. What they wrote of him soon after is told in the following quotations, with which we shall close. They have a peculiar interest, as the first printed statements about the rattlesnake, and as giving the earliest expression to certain fallacies which still retain their hold upon the popular mind.

From New English Canaan, or New Canaan. Written by Thomar Morton, of Clifford's-inn, Gent. Printed at Amsterdam, 1637.

"There is one creeping beast or longe creeple (as the name is in Devonshire) that hath a rattle at his tayle, that does discover his age; for so many yeares as hee hath lived, so many joynts are in that rattle, which soundeth (when it is in motion) like pease in a bladder, & this beast is called a rattlesnake; but the Salvages give him the name of Sesick; which some take to be the Adder; & it may well be so (for the Salvages are significant in their denomination of anything) & is no lesse hurtful than the Adder of England & no more. I have had my dogge venomed with troubling one of these, & so swelled that I had thought it would have bin his death; but with one saucer full of salet oyle poured downe his throate he recovered, & the swelling assuaged by the next day. The like experiment hath bin made upon a boy, that hath by chaunce troad upon one of these, & the boy never the worse. Therefore it is simplicity in any one that shall tell a bugbeare tale of horror, or terrible serpents that are in that land." (p.82.)

From New England's Prospect. By William Wood. London, 1636.

"That which is most injurious to the person & life of man is a Rattlesnake, which is generally a yard & a halfe long, as thick in the middle as the small of a man's legge; she hath a yellow belly, her backe being spotted with blacke, russet yellow, & greene colours placed like scales; at her taile is a rattle with which shee makes a noyse when shee is molested, or when shee seeth any approach neere her; her neck seemes to be nò thicker than a man's thumbe, yet can she swallow a Squerrill, having a great wide mouth, with teeth as sharpe as needles, wherewith shee biteth such as tread upon her; her poyson lyeth in her teeth, for she hath no sting. When any man is bitten by any one of these creatures, the poyson spreads so suddenly through the veins, & so runs to the heart, that in one hour it causeth death, unlesse he hath the Antidote to ex-

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pell the poyson, which is a root called Snakeweede, which must be champed, the spittle swallowed & the roote applied to the sore; this is present cure against that which would be present death without it; this weede is ranke poyson, if it be taken by any man that is not bitten, unlesse it be physically compounded; whosoever is bitten by these snakes his flesh becomes spotted like a leaper untill he be perfectly cured. It is reported that if the party live that is bitten, the snake will dye, & if the party dye the snake will live. This is the most poysonous and dangerous creature, yet nothing so bad as the report goes of him in England. For whereas hee is said to kill a man with his breath, & that hee can flie, there is no such matter, for he is naturally the most sleepie & unnimble creature that lives, never offering to leape or bite any man if he be not trodden on first: & it is their desire in hot weather to lie in pathes, where the sun may shine on them, where they will sleepe so soundly that I have known foure men stride over one of them & never awake her: five or six men have been bitten by them, which by using snakeweede were all cured, never yet any losing his life by them. Cowes have been bitten, but being cut in divers places & this weede thrust into their flesh were cured. I never heard of any beast that was yet lost by any of them, saving one mare." (p. 38.)

From New England's Rarities. Discovered by John Josselyn, Gent. London, 1672.

"The Rattle Snake who poysons with a vapour that comes through two crooked fanges in their mouths; the hollows of these fanges are black as ink. The Indians when weary with travelling, will take them up with their bare hands, laying hold with one hand behind their head, and with the other taking hold of their tail, & with their teeth tear off the skin of their backs & feed upon them alive, which they say refresheth them." Ugh!! (p. 38.)

We are aware of no earlier accounts; so that, in the scope of this article, the reader has the first and the very last words concerning the serpent in question.

SENT TO THE TOWER.

NEITHER for my stubborn patriotism, like Owen Glendower; nor for my faithfulness to my sovereign, like Sir Simon Burley; nor through my weakness of character, like Richard the Second; nor because of the jealousy of ambitious relatives, like the Henrys and Edwards; nor on a charge of witchcraft, like Lord Hastings; nor for aspiring to marry above me, like Arundell of Norfolk; nor for my religious zeal, like Sir Thomas More, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Anne Askew, and the seven bishops; nor for my royal blood, like the venerable Countess of Salisbury; nor for my ambition, like the Dudleys; nor as a victim to court intrigues, like Raleigh, Cromwell, and Essex; nor for my treason, like Balmerino and Lovat; nor for defying the Speaker's warrant, like Sir Francis Burdett—have I been sent to the Tower. A sense of shame, combined with ignorance, pure and unadulterated, has brought me here, and I place myself in the custody of a warder with a complete sense of humility and submission. "Whilst contemplating the Tower of London," my guide-book tells me, "the mind spontaneously reverts to the Norman Conquest." What has been the matter with *my* mind, that, instead of "spontaneously reverting," as it ought to have done, I have lived all these years in London without visiting its famous fortress? I once penetrated secret chambers in Nantes armouries, and discovered an inscription, "*Arthur and Thomas Jackson of Bristoll, prisoners of Warr* 1703," as my reward; I have journeyed to Champtocé for the express purpose of gazing on the ruined castle of that Sieur de Retz, who is said to have been the original Blue Beard; and have visited modern dungeons and ancient donjons, castles, galleries, and fortresses in most of the countries in Europe. But the show-places of my own city are unknown to me. I have never been up the Monument, nor through Westminster Abbey. My knowledge of St. Paul's is limited to distant views of its dome, and nearer views of its railings. The Thames Tunnel is a picture, a magic-lantern slide, the top of my old nurse's workbox, a stopping pier for Greenwich steamboats, a gaudy paper-weight; but it is not a reality for me. I could not tell you the way to the Mint; and I saw the state apartments at Windsor Castle for the first time on Tuesday week. In short, after living in London more years than I care to say, its sights are as strange to me as those of Paris and Vienna, of Munich and Florence, of Rome and Milan, are familiar. Taking myself seriously to task, I determine to devote time to the sights of London, and at once find myself at sea. On asking to be taken up to the ball of St. Paul's I find divine service going on, and the beadle scandalised at my request. Walking on to Monument-yard, the janitor points silently to a painted board, which says "no one admitted while the Monument is under repair," and looks as if he thought me a barbarian for troubling him under the circumstances. It is now dusk, and I defer my visit to the Tower until next day. Excited and eager, I rise early, perform a journey by railway and by steamer, and present myself at the gates at nine, to find that the warders do not begin duty till half-past ten, and that the first "show-round" will not be for one hour and fifteen minutes later. So much for a Londoner's ignorance of London. A country cousin, or an intelligent Zulu visitor, would have managed better; and having made pilgrimages to the city in vain on two separate days, I take a penny steamboat ticket at Westminster on a third, with my confidence considerably shaken in my own knowledge of town.

My first thoughts on board are, why have I neglected this mode of conveyance so long, and why are not the steamers fuller of the class who ride in hansoms, and to whom personal economy is not an object in life? Within given points, your steamboat is a swifter as well as a cheaper means of gaining your destination, but I see few people on board to whom the saving of time is likely to be of consequence. Yet any one going, we will say from the Houses of Parliament to

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London Bridge, would save many minutes if he went by water instead of driving, and there seems to be a link wanting between the express steamers and the carriage-driving and cab-riding public. The literature and the refreshment sold on board confirm my views. The illustrated and facetious broad-sheet belongs to a bygone time, and speaks to even a lower order of intelligence than our penny comic periodicals appeal to now. The pictorial Police News, with fancy woodcuts of the latest murderer disembowelling his victim, and of the latest murderer but one swinging on the gallows (the evil man's moustache and features being quite visible through the white cap), is not an intellectual form of literary solace; and though the boy shouts astutely "with portraits of the gallows for the last time, through 'angings goin' to be done in private," he meets with as little encouragement as the vendor of oranges and almond paste. The young men and boys on board, who remind one somehow of a third-rate theatre, have an air of truant playing, and such of them as have parcels put them under the seats to place hands in pockets and patrol the deck unconcernedly. Looking about among the passengers, we also notice clerks, old and young, aged nondescripts, whose garments bear the traces of many years' conflict with a greasy and cloth-staining world, and a few idlers who gaze critically on the Thames Embankment, and call it "a tidy bit of work," as if it were a composition in Berlin wool, and remind each other how long they "said it would be about, when it was fust begun." But no one on board seems of sufficient importance to himself and to the world to make his time valuable, and we land at All Hallows' pier, with a troubled conviction that we have not madé out why the classes who are at once busy and prosperous do not avail themselves of the steamers of the Thames.

Through cavernous passages which, though open at the top, are dungeon-like in their blank high walls; past the quaint old tavern, where "warm" sea-faring men and hard traders take their half-pints of heady port from the wood, with "morsels"—say a six-inch cube—of cheese at eleven in the day; past, too, its antithesis, the large-windowed café of the Italian confectioner who sells hot maccaroni, sweetmeats, cheap wine, and light dishes of eggs, and grease, and salad, and who seems to have transported his establishment bodily from one of the quays of Genoa or Leghorn to Thames-street, E.C.; we arrive at our destination and find the Tower straight ahead of us, but hidden by bulging warehouses, and bales, and cranes. The shops around have the distinctive marks of the district, and the trade taste and, decoration savour strongly of realism. Thus, every fish-dealer seems to sell cod-liver oil, and rows upon rows of bottles of bright golden liquid fringe and border the bodies of the huge cod themselves. Unpleasant looking toads, lizards, and puny crocodiles swing in bottles from one warehouse door; and a poetical publican, who declines to rival his dry-goods neighbour by selling tea, winds up a distich to that effect, with—

> Nor deal in goods sold by my grocer-brother,
> But live in harmony with one another.

Going round by Tower Dock, the dryness of which is relieved by a couple of taverns in near contiguity, we see precisely the same string of listless ragged figures we left here yesterday. Forlorn, weary, wretched, they seem to have neither washed nor slept nor moved since that time. "Labourers-on-the-look-out-for-a-job, would-you-give-a-poor-man-out-o'-work-the-price-of-a-crust-of-bread-master?" (all in one word) is the answer of the nearest of them to our question as to why they are there and for what they are waiting. We incautiously give the poor man out of luck the price of a crust of bread, and at once find ourselves a centre of attraction to an unsavoury crowd. Faces so seamy, unkempt, unshorn, and fierce, that it is difficult to think of them as ever having been babies, or ought else unrepulsive and human, cluster round and plead roughly for help. "There has been no work to get latterly, times are so bad and hard, and won't we give 'em what we've given the other man, who hasn't a family, so help them, he hasn't, and had a job, too, the day before yesterday." Not a pleasant introduction to sight-seeing, this hoard of hungry desperate men; and distributing some small money, we pass through a sentry-guarded gate to the right, and stand face to face with a little knot of town beef-eaters with a considerable sense of relief.

"'Beefeaters,' if you like to call us so, of course," said the fine old veteran we struck up a friendship with upon the instant; "and beefeaters I believe we're mostly known as among the commoner sort o' people. But 'Warders of the Tower,'" drawing himself up an inch or two, "is our proper title, and our uniform is the same as the Yeomen of the Guard at St. James's, who walk next before the Queen when she opens parliament in state and has her eight cream-coloured horses out. Not this thing; this is only our working everyday dress, but a coat of all scarlet covered with gold, very handsome and expensive. We're all old soldiers who've never bin tried by court-martial. I was sergeant in the 9th Lancers myself, and well remember Sir Hope Grant joining us in Glasgow, when he was a mere boy, in 1826. Got on wonderfully since then, hasn't he, sir? So young, you see, to be in his position; but he were always a kind, good man to the soldiers, and every one of 'em was glad when he was promoted up and up as he has been. The great Duke of Wellington appointed me here four-and-twenty years ago, when he was Constable of the Tower, and it is a comfortable little thing enough, added to one's pension, though it wouldn't do without that. No, sir, we don't all have apartments found us. There's a certain amount of accommodation for the warders, and as one set of rooms gets vacant

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the next man in seniority takes them. Formerly it used to be that when a man died who had rooms, the one appointed to fill his vacancy stepped into them in his place; but that's altered now, and very properly, and the warders who've been longest here get them in their turn. When shall we be going round? In exactly six minutes from now. You see, we arrange it this way: there's forty-four warders, and we take it in turn to show visitors about. Every quarter of an hour, from half-past ten to four a party starts from this refreshment-room, and goes right through the armouries and to the regalia-room. But if, mind you, twelve people are ready before the quarter's up, we just start with them without waiting. You'll get two tickets at sixpence each, and that's all the expense you'll be at. Never bin here before, sir? Well, that's wonderful that is. A stranger to London, sir? No! and never seen the Tower! Well, don't you bother yourself with that guide-book while I'm with you. I'll show you everything worth seeing, take my word, so you keep the book to amuse yourself when you get home." Out of the gorgeous scarlet and gold upon the surpassing beauty of which my old friend evidently loved to linger, and in their work-a-day attire, the warders look like something between a modern fireman and Gog and Magog. A black velvet biscuit-box, or a stiff inverted reticule adorned with the ribbons of the recruiting-sergeant disfigures their heads ("time of Henry the Seventh—this hat is a part of our regular uniform"), while the green cloth tunic, patched with red and ornamented on the chest by a crimson lion of acrobatic demeanour and pursuits, and the dingy purple macintosh cape which surmounted it are far more suggestive of modern masquerading than ancient costume.

If our party of sight-seers had been bound to deliver a verdict upon what our good old warder showed us in his round, I venture to think we should have evolved something startling and unusual. There was a deaf man, with a shrewish wife, who repeated every description as if it were a taunt, and darted arrowy little sayings into her husband's ear with a precision which showed the fine old English custom of torture had not gone out with the thumb-screw. There were three sailors who either did not speak English or disdained to avail themselves of a language which was shared by the four private soldiers who accompanied us; and there were some ladies of mature age who convoyed two children—emphasising our warder's sonorous words by ingenious twistings of their victims' necks and by nudges in their backs. Lastly, there was your servant, the avidity of whose thirst for knowledge compelled him to silence, that he might hear the more. I have no doubt we all enjoyed it immensely, but a less demonstrative dozen it would have been difficult to find. The policemen practising cutlass-drill in the dried-up moat awakened as much expression of interest as the Traitor's Gate; and the pencilled name of a vulgarity of yesterday was grinned over with more palpable sympathy than the autograph of Dudley. The armoury, containing the mounted knights, "with their armour and horses exactly as they were in life," gave much quiet delight, which, in my case, was not lessened by the discovery that Edward the Fourth carried a striped barber's pole as a lance, that the Duke of Wellington's celebrated horse, Copenhagen, was of a dull crimson hue, and that several of the other steeds pranced and curveted under their riders in a highly groomed condition from black lead. If it be not irreverent to hint at "ginger" in connexion with these fiery animals, it really expresses their condition. All are of wood, and of an abnormal friskiness, which has been caught and fixed. Thus, one spirited animal champs his bit, so as to show quite an array of front teeth, and grins in ghastly fashion under the weight of his rider's armour. Another paws the ground impatiently and stands with one foot in the air, like some highly trained circus-steed suddenly impressed with the realities of life; while a third is skittishly ambling, as if meditating a bolt through the stained glass window and intervening wall into the Thames. Each horse has a different and distinct attitude of its own, and this row of rigid painted animals, all immovable and all imitating motion, has an effect which is partly humorous and partly ghostly. Six centuries have gone by since the owner of the first suit drew his sword, as his effigy is represented to be doing now; but the armour does not seem to have missed him much, and remains unmoved while our friend the warder points out its deficiencies and advantages as compared with the next suit. Past tilting lances, vam-plates, war-saddles, spiked chanfrons, ear-guards, cuirasses, helmets, breast-plates, and leg-armour, all on effigies, and all reminding one rather unpleasantly of death in life—and we are facing the old mask formerly worn by the headsman, and the false face and grotesque ears of Henry the Eighth's fool.

We are here between two fires, for the door by which we entered has just admitted another party of twelve, headed by a warder, and from the stairs above me a third party is having the Tower treasures explained. The result is that the descriptions mingle, and "George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, in a full soot o' plate, a wheel-lock petronel in his hands, and a spanner or instrument to wind up the spring," blends strangely with "Two kettles taken at Blenheim in the year 1704," and "Suit belonging to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk—a tidy-sized sort o' man to sit upon a horse." All is given in the conventional showman voice, full of sonorous monotony, and as at one time we are three separate parties in one room, the confusion of description is rather startling. "Knights used to faint under their armour, and could not rise," and, "Sword of the celebrated Tippoo Sahib, captured at Seringapatam," sounded like portions of the same sentence, and we don't get rid of this anomaly until we are in Queen Elizabeth's armoury in the White Tower, and gazing on her effigy mounted on a carved white horse

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of surpassing rigidity. We all take great interest in the weapons here. The "morning star" and "the holy water sprinkle," or the balls of wood armed with spikes and hanging loosely from a pole, which were in use from the Conquest to Henry the Eighth's time, give us infinite delight. The deaf man is made to prod himself descriptively, and his interpretess explains that she thinks he'll understand *that*: the children are asked patronisingly whether they'd like to feel such a morning star on *their* heads, as if the superiority of the people talking made them indifferent to physical pain. We spend quite five minutes in this armoury, and leave it with a confused sense that we have been fierce soldiers at some previous stage of our existence, and that we have carried halberts and pounded our enemies with the military flail; afterwards losing our heads on the block upon which Kilmarnock and Lovat suffered. The narrow prison of Sir Walter Raleigh, with its thick and gloomy walls, and the cell in which he slept; the ancient chapel of St. Peter, containing the dust of Lady Jane Grey; and the vast armouries filled with recently converted breechloaders, and swords and bayonets tastefully arranged, all come in rotation. We follow one another up and down turret-stairs, across courtyards, and into chambers, like so many sheep, asking few questions, and with a certain distrust, as if each were afraid of exposing his ignorance to his neighbour. The warder treats us like children with an uncontrollable propensity to do the wrong thing at the wrong time. "Now, then, step a little forward, and take a good look upward now, and round about you, if you be so minded; but on no account don't touch anything, because that's strictly forbidden. There's a pretty design for you now—a passion-flower that is, and made up entirely of pistols and sword-blades. That one overhead is taken from the top of the Prince of Wales's wedding-cake, and is made up of three thousand pieces—pistols, bayonets, and sword-blades. Then there's sunflowers, and yonder's the rising sun and some serpents, all made out of arms, and as pretty designs as you might wish to see." These substantial efforts of fancy are interspersed throughout a room holding sixty-five thousand stand of arms, and are really not unlike what they purported to be. They vie with the regalia in arousing interest, and utterly outshine the historical portions of the Tower. Indeed, it was difficult to ascertain from the demeanour of my fellow sight-seers whether they knew anything concerning these, except what they learnt then and there from the warder. "Does the Queen ever live here now?" and "Wasn't there some prisoners to be seen as well?" did not convey a high idea of the knowledge of the visitors, and, from the manner of our guide's reply, we judged such questions to be common to his experience.

But the regalia rouses everybody into sighs and grunts of admiration. Passing through an ante-room, we are face to face with the British crown, and with a variety of baubles which are gaudy and commonplace enough, save for their intrinsic value and associations. Then a female custodian comes forward to explain. She puts us in position round the glass and iron cage, and repeats her little lesson with the liveliness of a funeral dirge. From the "crown worn by her present Majesty, with heart-shaped ruby in the centre" to the "staff of Edward the Confessor, four feet long, and of pure gold," and the "swords of Justice and Mercy, that of Mercy having a blunt edge," her manner never altered, and we rejoined the jolly warder outside, convinced that contemplating other people's jewels, even when regal, all day and every day has in it something crushing to the soul. From the regalia we pass to Beauchamp Tower, across a damp yard, where the site of the old beheading block, and some three square yards of grimy turf are railed off as the "Tower Green," on which Anne Boleyn and others were beheaded. The warder carefully remains at the foot of the stairs while we rush up to gaze ignorantly at inscriptions, and, if we choose, to purchase a special handbook with the inscribers' names. This is the last thing shown, and it elicited the most animated comment I heard: "Why the doose don't they light up the stoopid old place with gas, instead o' makin' one stumble up stone stairs with no more light in 'em than my coal cellar at home?"

We are at Traitors' Gate again, as our guide reminds us, in exactly one hour and five minutes from the time when we left it. If we ever return to the Tower, we should prefer to re-visit it without companions, save of our own choosing, and to plod slowly through its dungeons and chambers with no other assistance than the history of our country affords.

THE DRAMATIC CARDINAL.

That the great Cardinal de Richelieu took so lively an interest in the drama that he may almost be looked upon as the father of French tragedy, is a fact pretty generally known; also that he tried his hand as a dramatic author, and produced plays, the weakness of which contrasted remarkably with the strength of his political operations. With his habitually nice discrimination of the minute details of character that are proper to every one of the illustrious personages of history whom, by the magic of his pen, he recalls to life, Lord Lytton, in his admirable play, has set down among the causes that induced the cardinal to eye with favour the somewhat suspicious De Mauprat, the circumstance that the latter was one of the chosen few who applauded the tragedy written by the former, and the allusion to his eminence's weak point is always thoroughly appreciated by the audience. But that many persons are aware of the important figure made by the cardinal in the early history of the French stage we very much doubt. Nevertheless there is a certain period in the chroni-

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cles of the Parisian drama, during which Richelieu is as ubiquitous as Figaro, and has equal right with the Barber to cry, "Largo al factotum." He builds theatres; he writes plays; he causes plays to be criticised.

The theatrical biography of the cardinal seems to begin with his patronage of Gros Guillaume, Gaulthier Garguille, and Turlupin, three journeymen bakers, who, displaying a certain amount of crude and coarse humour in certain broad farces, became so exceedingly popular that they seriously frightened the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, then esteemed the home of the classical and the legitimate. Let it not be imagined that, like the new actors of a more recent date, they contributed towards the fall of the drama. In the days of the "Turlupinades," as the farces were called, after the professional name of one of the actors therein, the French stage had not even begun to rise. Poets there were, indeed, of lofty ambition, but the results of their inspiration now only hold a place among the curiosities of literature. Pierre Corneille is the earliest dramatist who is allowed to hold a niche in the French Panthéon, and the first comedy of the immortal Pierre (Mélite) was not brought out before 1630. The Cid, from which his fame may be dated, did not see light till about six years afterwards. In 1634 the three drolls were all gathered to their fathers, dying, it is said, in the same week, in consequence of the terror with which they were seized on finding themselves involved in a serious scrape (owing to an exaggerated imitation, on the part of Gros Guillaume) by one of the Parisian magistrates.

When the haughty artists of the Hôtel de Bourgogne complained to the cardinal of the misconduct of Turlupin and Co., his eminence resolved to look into the rights of the case, and inviting the three trespassers to the Palais Cardinal—the present Palais Royal—which he had recently built, induced them to give a taste of their quality in his presence, an alcove being the stage on which they were to display their abilities. So successful was their performance that the discomfited company of the Hôtel de Bourgogne were enjoined to take them into their own body; the cardinal remarking that whereas the more dignified artists always left him sad, the introduction of the comic element would, doubtless, prove beneficial.

The joke which so much tickled the cardinal was not of the most refined order. Gros Guillaume, dressed as a grotesque woman, was supposed to be the wife of Turlupin, who, violently enraged, threatened to cut off the head of his ridiculous better half with a wooden sabre, but was suddenly appeased when the lady sued for mercy in the name of the cabbage soup which she had made for him the evening before. The sabre fell from his hands, and he exclaimed, "Ah, the hussy! she touches me on the weak point; the fat of the soup still sticks to my heart."

The victory of the three bakers over their adversaries did them, after all, more harm than good; for, had they remained in their old quarter, they would not have got into a scrape with the magistrate.

In 1600 the company of the Hôtel de Bourgogne having divided itself into two parts, one of them left the old house to sojourn at the Marais, while at the Hôtel du Petit Bourbon an Italian company had been performing since 1577. Such was the predilection of the cardinal for theatrical amusement that one private theatre in the Palais Cardinal was not sufficient to meet his demands. A small theatre was constructed, capable of holding six hundred, and a larger one, that held more than three thousand. In the former of these the ordinary pieces of the Hôtel de Bourgogne and the Marais were represented; the latter was reserved for grand occasions.

But if Richelieu wished to be renowned as a Mæcenas of the drama, he was still more ambitious of the fame of a dramatic poet. He generally worked with assistants, who might be called professional, and who were the ostensible authors of the piece; but it was usually understood that, in some way or other, it proceeded from the cardinal, and, consequently, fault could not be found with it, save at the risk of giving offence in high quarters.

The poetical assistants were usually five in number, and the first piece that resulted from the grand combination of intellectual labour seems to have been a comedy, entitled Les Thuileries. This, it appears, was constructed by the cardinal, and written by the five, one of whom—no less a person than Corneille, whose Cid, however, had not yet seen the light—suggested that the plan of the third act might be advantageously altered. Far from taking the wholesome advice kindly, Richelieu told Corneille that he ought to have an "esprit de suite"—an expression proper to the idiomatic tongue of the cardinal rather than to that of Parisians in general. It was, in fact, an euphemism for "blind obedience."

Colletet, another of the five, and likewise a member of the French Academy, afforded more unmixed satisfaction. Three lines which he wrote in reference to the piece of water in the Thuileries were considered so exceedingly felicitous by the cardinal, that he rushed at once to his escritoire, and taking out fifty pistoles, thrust them into the hand of the fortunate genius, at the same time declaring that this sum was only intended to reward the specially beautiful lines, and that the king himself would not be wealthy enough adequately to reward the rest. The gem so highly prized may be construed in English thus:

> The duck bedews herself with liquid mud,
> Then with brave voice and widely flapping wings
> Rouses the drake, that lingers at her side.

The happy man expressed his gratitude in a couplet, which declared how gladly he would sell his whole library at the price which the cardinal had given for a few lines. Whatever may be deemed the merit of these lines, on

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them only depends the fame of Colletet. He put into verse a tragedy called Cymiade, which had been written in prose by the Abbé d'Aubignac, and which, although produced, has since sunk into oblivion; but the three lines and the grateful couplet are to be found in every collection of French theatrical anecdotes.

Far more celebrated than Colletet was Jean Chapelain, who wrote the prologue to Les Thuileries, and who was likewise one of the earlier members of the Academy; for he has left behind him the reputation of being the very worst French poet that ever put pen to paper. However, the unwieldy poem on the subject of the Maid of Orleans, which was entitled La Pucelle, and which raised him to the summit of his bad eminence, did not make its appearance till more than twenty years after the first performance of the cardinal's comedy at the Palais Royal, which took place in 1635. This prologue, at any rate, answered its purpose; for Richelieu was so highly pleased with it, that he requested Chapelain to lend him his name, adding that in return he would lend him his purse on some future occasion.

Middling as the plays might be that were issued by the dramatic firm of Richelieu and Co., there was at the time glory in being connected with them. The illustrious five had a bench to themselves in the best part of the theatre; their names were honourably mentioned in the prologue, and their pieces were always played in the presence of the king and court.

Pierre Corneille was the only poet of the five who attained a really great reputation. Of the rest the most noted was Desmarets de Saint Sorlin, who, it seems, had not the least natural inclination to become a dramatic poet, but whose genius, latent even to himself, was somehow detected by the cardinal. The light which he possessed unknown he would willingly have kept under a bushel, even after it had been discovered by the great man; but Richelieu pressed him so hardly to try his hand at a plot, that refusal at last became dangerous. The plot once achieved, some other gifted mortal might write the verse. At all events, the cardinal wished to break in the recalcitrant man of talent by degrees.

Working with the fear of Richelieu before his eyes, Desmarets produced the skeleton of a comedy called Aspasie, the success of which, with his patron, literally exceeded his hopes; for whereas he had done all that he had desired to do, and a great deal more, he was now enjoined to write the verse, and encouraged by the remark that no other was worthy to perform a task so noble. Aspasie was accordingly finished, in spite of the poet's repugnance, played in the presence of the Duke of Parma, and, by command of his eminence, applauded to the skies.

Left to himself, Desmarets would have preferred epic to dramatic poetry; and when Richelieu, rendered more urgent than ever by the success of Aspasie, proposed that he should supply a similar work every year, he endeavoured to shield himself against the new infliction by alleging that his hours were fully occupied by the composition of an heroic poem on the subject of the ancient King Clovis, of which he had already written two books, and which would throw the poetic lustre over France in general, and the cardinal in particular, and make the reign of Louis the Thirteenth famous in the annals of poesy. The man who wants a comedy is not to be put off with an epic, and Richelieu, who had given Desmarets two snug places under government, besides making him a member of the Academy, replied that the serious duties of his protégé demanded more recreation, and that the composition of dramatic pieces was a light and pleasant amusement. He added, more than a lifetime would be required for the completion of Clovis; and in this respect he was wrong, for in 1657, more than twenty years after the production of Aspasie, the ponderous epic appeared in twenty-six cantos, which were afterwards reduced to twenty.

Desmarets having been thus fairly bagged by the cardinal, the conqueror and the captive set their shoulders to the wheel, and turned out a comedy called Les Visionnaires, which really acquired something like a grand reputation. The noise that it made originated no doubt in the will of the all-potent cardinal, but it was a good loud noise at any rate, and owed much of its wide-spreading effect to the circumstance that it was virtually a "hit" at actual celebrities of the day. The Visionnaires named in the title were persons respectively distinguished by some particular crotchet, and all the initiated among the audience were perfectly aware for whom the dramatic portrait was intended. One lady could bestow her affections on none but Alexander the Great, and she was understood to represent Madame de Sablé, one of the most famous of the so-called "précieuses," who had dared to repel the advances of the cardinal himself, and who was castigated in the play accordingly. The arch intriguer, Madame de Chavigny, who is so conspicuous in the history of Anne of Austria, figured as the coquette of the story. And there was a third female "visionary" who was never happy save at the theatre, and who was meant for the great Madame de Rambouillet, queen and hostess of "précieuses" in general. All this was vastly amusing.

Many persons have learned by worldly experience that it is easier to form a connexion than to get rid of one, and this lesson was received by Desmarets, who, from the time when Les Visionnaires was first brought out, could not write a piece without exciting a suspicion that the cardinal had a finger in the pie. There was no direct information to the effect that a tragedy called Roxane, which was brought out in 1640, had any other author than Desmarets; but the world insisted that the cardinal had lent his valuable assistance. On the strength of this belief the poet Voiture, renowned in his day, extolled the play in the most disgusting spirit of adulation; and results proved that the hypothesis of the cardinal's partnership was the safest, if not the most correct that could be adopted; for the

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Abbé d'Aubignac, a man of decided talent and erudition, was not allowed a seat in the French Academy; nor could his rejection be ascribed to any cause, save his atrocious opinion, openly expressed, that Roxane was but an indifferent work after all.

But the dramatic work in which Richelieu took the greatest pride was the tragedy Mirame, of which Desmarets was the only nominal author, but which certainly owed its existence partly to the cardinal, who built the large private theatre in the Palais Royal with the sole view of producing it in effective style. On the first representation the play failed miserably, and Richelieu, in despair, sent for Desmarets, who shook in his shoes on receiving the summons, and had the precaution to take with him a friend, in whose practical wisdom he felt great confidence. "Sad want of taste in the French," cried the cardinal, as they both entered; "they don't even like Mirame." "Nay, your Eminence," said the judicious friend, "the public is not to blame—still less the author of that piece; but those actors—ah those actors! Your Eminence must have noticed, not only that they had not learned their parts, but that they were disgracefully intoxicated." Richelieu found the explanation satisfactory, and the second performance of Mirame—the actors having been duly admonished, and the audience carefully selected—went off with the most brilliant success, the cardinal himself being the ringleader of approbation, violently using hands and feet in the work of applause, and sometimes thrusting his body far out of his box to secure silence and a proper appreciation of the choice passages.

Much less fortunate was Europe, another joint production, which, like Mirame, was nominally the sole work of Desmarets, and the dulness of which must have been surprising. The interest of the piece was intended to be purely political; allegorical representations of Spain, France, and other European countries, stalk upon the boards, and discourse of their power, their resources, and their relations with each other. Richelieu, when the work was complete, found it so very admirable that, in order to have a special opinion, he sent it to the French Academy, with the request that the forty members of that grave body would favour him with an impartial opinion. The Academicians, forgetting for the nonce that they were the cardinal's creatures, looked rather at the letter than at the spirit of this request, and returned the play with such a severe criticism that his eminence, stung to the quick, tore up the manuscript, and flung it into the fireplace. Had the season been winter, the cardinal would have been spared further annoyance, and a fight famed in the annals of French literature would have been avoided; but, as it happened, the season was spring, and there was no fire; so the cardinal, who had changed his mind in the course of the night, was enabled to collect the precious fragments in the morning, and to have a fair new copy made with all possible speed. A few slight alterations alone distinguished the second from the first edition of the play, and the intellect of the Academicians had undergone an amelioration likewise. They now clearly saw that their approval was expected, and, like wise and learned gentlemen as they were, they sent in praise without measure, having carefully avoided a reperusal of the work, partly to save themselves trouble, partly to avoid every risk that an unfavourable impression might be revived.

But the misfortunes of Europe were not to be averted. Elated with the applause of the Academy, the cardinal could no longer be content with a private triumph, but must needs have his play brought out at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, the great public theatre, during the first "run" (as we should now say) of the Cid. Besides his earlier comedies, Corneille had already produced a tragedy on the subject of Medea, with slight success; but the Cid, brought out in 1636, was a work to which nothing comparable had ever been seen in Paris, and about which everybody was in ecstacy. Into the midst of the general enthusiasm was thrust the poor insipid Europe, doomed to confront a throng composed of people in general, and consequently including some irreverend souls who feared not Richelieu. So when, after the termination of the play, one of the actors announced it for repetition on the following day, unequivocal sounds of disapprobation arose on all sides, and a general cry was raised for the all-popular Cid. A severe critique written on Corneille's play by the Academy, at the instigation of the cardinal, in consequence of this mishap, is among the memorabilia of French literary history.

A thought has occurred to us while collecting the materials for this paper. The generality of Englishmen, including those who are passionately fond of French prose, have a natural antipathy to French heroic verse, and avoid Corneille and Racine with an instinctive dread of boredom, which only the genius of a Rachel was able to subdue. To the educated Parisian, a contest between Richelieu and his creatures on one side, and the great Corneille on the other, places the former in a purely ridiculous position; but we doubt whether many Englishmen, masters of the French language, would, without having undergone an acclimatising process, arrive at the conclusion that a play by Desmarets was so very, very bad, granted that the best tragedy by Corneille was so very, very good.

HOLIDAY ROMANCE,

By CHARLES DICKENS,

Will be concluded in the next Number.

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ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

The Events related in several Narratives.

FIRST NARRATIVE.

Contributed by Miss Clack; Niece of the late Sir John Verinder.

CHAPTER I.

I AM indebted to my dear parents (both now in heaven) for having had habits of order and regularity instilled into me at a very early age.

In that happy bygone time, I was taught to keep my hair tidy at all hours of the day and night, and to fold up every article of my clothing carefully, in the same order, on the same chair, in the same place at the foot of the bed, before retiring to rest. An entry of the day's events in my little diary invariably preceded the folding up. The Evening Hymn (repeated in bed) invariably followed the folding up. And the sweet sleep of childhood invariably followed the Evening Hymn.

In later life (alas!) the Hymn has been succeeded by sad and bitter meditations; and the sweet sleep has been but ill exchanged for the broken slumbers which haunt the uneasy pillow of care. On the other hand, I have continued to fold my clothes, and to keep my little diary. The former habit links me to my happy childhood—before papa was ruined. The latter habit—hitherto mainly useful in helping me to discipline the fallen nature which we all inherit from Adam—has unexpectedly proved important to my humble interests in quite another way. It has enabled poor Me to serve the caprice of a wealthy member of our family. I am fortunate enough to be useful (in the worldly sense of the word) to Mr. Franklin Blake.

I have been cut off from all news of the prosperous branch of the family for some time past. When we are isolated and poor, we are not infrequently forgotten. I am now living, for economy's sake, in a little town in Britany, inhabited by a select circle of serious English friends, and possessed of the advantages of a Protestant clergyman and a cheap market.

In this retirement—a Patmos amid the howling ocean of popery that surrounds us—a letter from England has reached me at last. I find my insignificant existence suddenly remembered by Mr. Franklin Blake. My wealthy relative—would that I could add my spiritually-wealthy relative!—writes, without even an attempt at disguising that he wants something of me. The whim has seized him to stir up the deplorable scandal of the Moonstone; and I am to help him by writing the account of what I myself witnessed while visiting at Aunt Verinder's house in London. Pecuniary remuneration is offered to me—with the want of feeling peculiar to the rich. I am to re-open wounds that Time has barely closed; I am to recal the most intensely painful remembrances—and this done, I am to feel myself compensated by a new laceration, in the shape of Mr. Blake's cheque. My nature is weak. It cost me a hard struggle, before Christian humility conquered sinful pride, and self-denial accepted the cheque.

Without my diary, I doubt—pray let me express it in the grossest terms!—if I could have honestly earned my money. With my diary, the poor labourer (who forgives Mr. Blake for insulting her) is worthy of her hire. Nothing escaped me at the time when I was visiting dear Aunt Verinder. Everything was entered (thanks to my early training) day by day as it happened; and everything, down to the smallest particular, shall be told here. My sacred regard for truth is (thank God) far above my respect for persons. It will be easy for Mr. Blake to suppress what may not prove to be sufficiently flattering in these pages to the person chiefly concerned in them. He has purchased my time; but not even *his* wealth can purchase my conscience too.*

* NOTE. *Added by Franklin Blake.*—Miss Clack may make her mind quite easy on this point. Nothing will be added, altered, or removed, in her manuscript, or in any of the other manuscripts which pass through my hands. Whatever opinions any of the writers may express, whatever peculiarities of treatment may mark, and perhaps in a literary sense, disfigure, the narratives which I am now collecting, not a line will be tampered with anywhere, from first to last. As genuine documents they are sent to me—and as genuine documents I shall preserve them; endorsed by the attestations of witnesses who can speak to the facts. It only remains to be added, that "the person chiefly concerned" in Miss Clack's narrative, is happy enough at the present moment, not only to brave the smartest exercise of Miss Clack's pen, but even to recognise its unquestionable value as an instrument for the exhibition of Miss Clack's character.

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My diary informs me, that I was accidentally passing Aunt Verinder's house in Montagu Square, on Monday, 3rd July, 1848.

Seeing the shutters opened, and the blinds drawn up, I felt that it would be an act of polite attention to knock, and make inquiries. The person who answered the door, informed me that my aunt and her daughter (I really cannot call her my cousin!) had arrived from the country a week since, and meditated making some stay in London. I sent up a message at once, declining to disturb them, and only begging to know whether I could be of any use.

The person who answered the door, took my message in insolent silence, and left me standing in the hall. She is the daughter of a heathen old man named Betteredge—long, too long, tolerated in my aunt's family. I sat down in the hall to wait for my answer—and, having always a few tracts in my bag, I selected one which proved to be quite providentially applicable to the person who answered the door. The hall was dirty, and the chair was hard; but the blessed consciousness of returning good for evil raised me quite above any trifling considerations of that kind. The tract was one of a series addressed to young women on the sinfulness of dress. In style it was devoutly familiar. Its title was, "A Word With You On Your Cap-Ribbons."

"My lady is much obliged, and begs you will come and lunch to-morrow at two."

I passed over the manner in which she gave her message, and the dreadful boldness of her look. I thanked this young castaway; and I said, in a tone of Christian interest, "Will you favour me by accepting a tract?"

She looked at the title. "Is it written by a man or a woman, Miss? If it's written by a woman, I had rather not read it on that account. If it's written by a man, I beg to inform him that he knows nothing about it." She handed me back the tract, and opened the door. We must sow the good seed somehow. I waited till the door was shut on me, and slipped the tract into the letter-box. When I had dropped another tract through the area railings, I felt relieved, in some small degree, of a heavy responsibility towards others.

We had a meeting that evening of the Select Committee of the Mothers-Small-Clothes'-Conversion-Society. The object of this excellent Charity is—as all serious people know—to rescue unredeemed fathers' trousers from the pawnbroker, and to prevent their resumption, on the part of the irreclaimable parent, by abridging them immediately to suit the proportions of the innocent son. I was a member, at that time, of the select committee; and I mention the Society here, because my precious and admirable friend, Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, was associated with our work of moral and material usefulness. I had expected to see him in the board-room, on the Monday evening of which I am now writing, and had purposed to tell him, when we met, of dear Aunt Verinder's arrival in London. To my great disappointment he never appeared. On my expressing a feeling of surprise at his absence, my sisters of the Committee all looked up together from their trousers (we had a great pressure of business that night), and asked in amazement if I had not heard the news. I acknowledged my ignorance, and was then told, for the first time, of an event which forms, so to speak, the starting-point of this narrative. On the previous Friday, two gentlemen — occupying widely different positions in society—had been the victims of an outrage which had startled all London. One of the gentlemen was Mr. Septimus Luker, of Lambeth. The other was Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.

Living in my present isolation, I have no means of introducing the newspaper account of the outrage into my narrative. I was also deprived, at the time, of the inestimable advantage of hearing the events related by the fervid eloquence of Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. All I can do is to state the facts as they were stated, on that Monday evening, to me; proceeding on the plan which I have been taught from infancy to adopt in folding up my clothes. Everything shall be put neatly, and everything shall be put in its place. These lines are written by a poor weak woman. From a poor weak woman who will be cruel enough to expect more?

The date—thanks to my dear parents, no dictionary that ever was written can be more particular than I am about dates—was Friday, June 30th, 1848.

Early on that memorable day our gifted Mr. Godfrey happened to be cashing a cheque at a banking-house in Lombard-street. The name of the firm is accidentally blotted in my diary, and my sacred regard for truth forbids me to hazard a guess in a matter of this kind. Fortunately, the name of the firm doesn't matter. What does matter is a circumstance that occurred when Mr. Godfrey had transacted his business. On gaining the door, he encountered a gentleman—a perfect stranger to him—who was accidentally leaving the office exactly at the same time as himself. A momentary contest of politeness ensued between them as to who should be the first to pass through the door of the bank. The stranger insisted on making Mr. Godfrey precede him; Mr. Godfrey said a few civil words; they bowed, and parted in the street.

Thoughtless and superficial people may say, Here is surely a very trumpery little incident related in an absurdly circumstantial manner. Oh, my young friends and fellow-sinners! beware of presuming to exercise your poor carnal reason. Oh, be morally tidy! Let your faith be as your stockings, and your stockings as your faith. Both ever spotless, and both ready to put on at a moment's notice!

I beg a thousand pardons. I have fallen insensibly into my Sunday-school style. Most inappropriate in such a record as this. Let me try to be worldly—let me say that trifles, in this case as in many others, led to terrible results. Merely premising that the polite

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stranger was Mr. Luker, of Lambeth, we will now follow Mr. Godfrey home to his residence at Kilburn.

He found waiting for him, in the hall, a poorly clad but delicate and interesting-looking little boy. The boy handed him a letter, merely mentioning that he had been entrusted with it by an old lady whom he did not know, and who had given him no instructions to wait for an answer. Such incidents as these were not uncommon in Mr. Godfrey's large experience as a promoter of public charities. He let the boy go, and opened the letter.

The handwriting was entirely unfamiliar to him. It requested his attendance, within an hour's time, at a house in Northumberland-street, Strand, which he had never had occasion to enter before. The object sought was to obtain from the worthy manager certain details on the subject of the Mothers' Small-Clothes-Conversion-Society, and the information was wanted by an elderly lady who proposed adding largely to the resources of the charity, if her questions were met by satisfactory replies. She mentioned her name, and she added that the shortness of her stay in London prevented her from giving any longer notice to the eminent philanthropist whom she addressed.

Ordinary people might have hesitated before setting aside their own engagements to suit the convenience of a stranger. The Christian Hero never hesitates where good is to be done. Mr. Godfrey instantly turned back, and proceeded to the house in Northumberland-street. A most respectable though somewhat corpulent man answered the door, and, on hearing Mr. Godfrey's name, immediately conducted him into an empty apartment at the back, on the drawing-room floor. He noticed two unusual things on entering the room. One of them was a faint odour of musk and camphor. The other was an ancient Oriental manuscript, richly illuminated with Indian figures and devices, that lay open to inspection on a table.

He was looking at the book, the position of which caused him to stand with his back turned towards the closed folding doors communicating with the front room, when, without the slightest previous noise to warn him, he felt himself suddenly seized round the neck from behind. He had just time to notice that the arm round his neck was naked and of a tawny-brown colour, before his eyes were bandaged, his mouth was gagged, and he was thrown helpless on the floor by (as he judged) two men. A third rifled his pockets, and—if, as a lady, I may venture to use such an expression—searched him, without ceremony, through and through to his skin.

Here I should greatly enjoy saying a few cheering words on the devout confidence which could alone have sustained Mr. Godfrey in an emergency so terrible as this. Perhaps, however, the position and appearance of my admirable friend at the culminating period of the outrage (as above described) are hardly within the proper limits of female discussion. Let me pass over the next few moments, and return to Mr. Godfrey at the time when the odious search of his person had been completed. The outrage had been perpetrated throughout in dead silence. At the end of it some words were exchanged, among the invisible wretches, in a language which he did not understand, but in tones which were plainly expressive (to his cultivated ear) of disappointment and rage. He was suddenly lifted from the ground, placed in a chair, and bound there hand and foot. The next moment he felt the air flowing in from the open door, listened, and felt persuaded that he was alone again in the room.

An interval elapsed, and he heard a sound below like the rustling sound of a woman's dress. It advanced up the stairs, and stopped. A female scream rent the atmosphere of guilt. A man's voice below exclaimed, "Hullo!" A man's feet ascended the stairs. Mr. Godfrey felt Christian fingers unfastening his bandage, and extracting his gag. He looked in amazement at two respectable strangers, and faintly articulated, "What does it mean?" The two respectable strangers looked back, and said, "Exactly the question we were going to ask *you*."

The inevitable explanation followed. No! Let me be scrupulously particular. Sal volatile and water followed, to compose dear Mr. Godfrey's nerves. The explanation came next.

It appeared, from the statement of the landlord and landlady of the house (persons of good repute in the neighbourhood), that their first and second floor apartments had been engaged, on the previous day, for a week certain, by a most respectable-looking gentleman—the same who has been already described as answering the door to Mr. Godfrey's knock. The gentleman had paid the week's rent and all the week's extras in advance, stating that the apartments were wanted for three Oriental noblemen, friends of his, who were visiting England for the first time. Early on the morning of the outrage, two of the Oriental strangers, accompanied by their respectable English friend, took possession of the apartments. The third was expected to join them shortly; and the luggage (reported as very bulky) was announced to follow when it had passed through the Custom-house, late in the afternoon. Not more than ten minutes previous to Mr. Godfrey's visit, the third foreigner had arrived. Nothing out of the common had happened, to the knowledge of the landlord and landlady down-stairs, until within the last five minutes—when they had seen the three foreigners, accompanied by their respectable English friend, all leave the house together, walking quietly in the direction of the Strand. Remembering that a visitor had called, and not having seen the visitor also leave the house, the landlady had thought it rather strange that the gentleman should be left by himself up-stairs. After a short discussion with her husband, she had considered it advisable to ascertain whether anything was wrong. The result had followed, as I have already attempted to describe it; and

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there the explanation of the landlord and the landlady came to an end.

An investigation was next made in the room. Dear Mr. Godfrey's property was found scattered in all directions. When the articles were collected, however, nothing was missing; his watch, chain, purse, keys, pocket-handkerchief, note-book, and all his loose papers had been closely examined, and had then been left unharmed to be resumed by the owner. In the same way, not the smallest morsel of property belonging to the proprietors of the house had been abstracted. The Oriental noblemen had removed their own illuminated manuscript, and had removed nothing else.

What did it mean? Taking the worldly point of view, it appeared to mean that Mr. Godfrey had been the victim of some incomprehensible error, committed by certain unknown men. A dark conspiracy was on foot in the midst of us; and our beloved and innocent friend had been entangled in its meshes. When the Christian hero of a hundred charitable victories plunges into a pitfall that has been dug for him by mistake, oh, what a warning it is to the rest of us to be unceasingly on our guard! How soon may our own evil passions prove to be Oriental noblemen who pounce on us unawares!

I could write pages of affectionate warning on this one theme, but (alas!) I am not permitted to improve—I am condemned to narrate. My wealthy relative's cheque—henceforth, the incubus of my existence—warns me that I have not done with this record of violence yet. We must leave Mr. Godfrey to recover in Northumberland-street, and must follow the proceedings of Mr. Luker, at a later period of the day.

After leaving the bank, Mr. Luker had visited various parts of London on business errands. Returning to his own residence, he found a letter waiting for him, which was described as having been left a short time previously by a boy. In this case, as in Mr. Godfrey's case, the handwriting was strange; but the name mentioned was the name of one of Mr. Luker's customers. His correspondent announced (writing in the third person—apparently by the hand of a deputy) that he had been unexpectedly summoned to London. He had just established himself in lodgings in Alfred-place, Tottenham Court-road; and he desired to see Mr. Luker immediately, on the subject of a purchase which he contemplated making. The gentleman was an enthusiastic collector of oriental antiquities, and had been for many years a liberal patron of the establishment in Lambeth. Oh, when shall we wean ourselves from the worship of Mammon! Mr. Luker called a cab, and drove off instantly to his liberal patron.

Exactly what had happened to Mr. Godfrey in Northumberland-street now happened to Mr. Luker in Alfred-place. Once more the respectable man answered the door, and showed the visitor up-stairs into the back drawing-room. There, again, lay the illuminated manuscript on a table. Mr. Luker's attention was absorbed, as Mr. Godfrey's attention had been absorbed, by this beautiful work of Indian art. He too was aroused from his studies by a tawny naked arm round his throat, by a bandage over his eyes, and by a gag in his mouth. He too was thrown prostrate, and searched to the skin. A longer interval had then elapsed than had passed in the experience of Mr. Godfrey; but it had ended, as before, in the persons of the house suspecting something wrong, and going up-stairs to see what had happened. Precisely the same explanation which the landlord in Northumberland-street had given to Mr. Godfrey, the landlord in Alfred-place now gave to Mr. Luker. Both had been imposed on in the same way by the plausible address and the well-filled purse of the respectable stranger, who introduced himself as acting for his foreign friends. The one point of difference between the two cases occurred when the scattered contents of Mr. Luker's pockets were being collected from the floor. His watch and purse were safe, but (less fortunate than Mr. Godfrey) one of the loose papers that he carried about him had been taken away. The paper in question acknowledged the receipt of a valuable of great price which Mr. Luker had that day left in the care of his bankers. This document would be useless for purposes of fraud, inasmuch as it provided that the valuable should only be given up on the personal application of the owner. As soon as he recovered himself, Mr. Luker hurried to the bank, on the chance that the thieves who had robbed him might ignorantly present themselves with the receipt. Nothing had been seen of them when he arrived at the establishment, and nothing was seen of them afterwards. Their respectable English friend had (in the opinion of the bankers) looked the receipt over before they attempted to make use of it, and had given them their warning in good time.

Information of both outrages was communicated to the police, and the needful investigations were pursued, I believe, with great energy. The authorities held that a robbery had been planned, on insufficient information received by the thieves. They had been plainly not sure whether Mr. Luker had, or had not, trusted the transmission of his precious gem to another person, and poor polite Mr. Godfrey had paid the penalty of having been seen accidentally speaking to him. Add to this, that Mr. Godfrey's absence from our Monday evening meeting had been occasioned by a consultation of the authorities, at which he was requested to assist—and all the explanations required being now given, I may proceed with the simpler story of my own little personal experiences in Montagu Square.

I was punctual to the luncheon-hour on Tuesday. Reference to my diary shows this to have been a chequered day—much in it to be devoutly regretted, much in it to be devoutly thankful for.

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Dear Aunt Verinder received me with her usual grace and kindness. But I noticed, after a little while, that something was wrong. Certain anxious looks escaped my aunt, all of which took the direction of her daughter. I never see Rachel myself without wondering how it can be that so insignificant-looking a person should be the child of such distinguished parents as Sir John and Lady Verinder. On this occasion, however, she not only disappointed—she really shocked me. There was an absence of all lady-like restraint in her language and manner most painful to see. She was possessed by some feverish excitement which made her distressingly loud when she laughed, and sinfully wasteful and capricious in what she ate and drank at lunch. I felt deeply for her poor mother, even before the true state of the case had been confidentially made known to me.

Luncheon over, my aunt said: "Remember what the doctor told you, Rachel, about quieting yourself with a book after taking your meals."

"I'll go into the library, mamma," she answered. "But if Godfrey calls, mind I am told of it. I am dying for more news of him, after his adventure in Northumberland-street." She kissed her mother on the forehead, and looked my way. "Good-bye, Clack!" she said, carelessly. Her insolence roused no angry feeling in me. I only made a private memorandum to pray for her.

When we were left by ourselves, my aunt told me the whole horrible story of the Indian Diamond, which, I am happy to know, it is not necessary to repeat here. She did not conceal from me that she would have preferred keeping silence on the subject. But when her own servants all knew of the loss of the Moonstone, and when some of the circumstances had actually found their way into the newspapers—when strangers were speculating whether there was any connexion between what had happened at Lady Verinder's country house, and what had happened in Northumberland-street and Alfred-place—concealment was not to be thought of; and perfect frankness became a necessity as well as a virtue.

Some persons, hearing what I now heard, would have been probably overwhelmed with astonishment. For my own part, knowing Rachel's spirit to have been essentially unregenerate from her childhood upwards, I was prepared for whatever my aunt could tell me on the subject of her daughter. It might have gone on from bad to worse till it ended in Murder; and I should still have said to myself, The natural result! oh, dear, dear, the natural result! The one thing that *did* shock me was the course my aunt had taken under the circumstances. Here surely was a case for a clergyman, if ever there was one yet! Lady Verinder had thought it a case for a physician. All my poor aunt's early life had been passed in her father's godless household. The natural result again! Oh, dear, dear, the natural result again!

"The doctors recommend plenty of exercise and amusement for Rachel, and strongly urge me to keep her mind as much as possible from dwelling on the past," said Lady Verinder.

"Oh, what heathen advice!" I thought to myself. "In this Christian country, what heathen advice!"

My aunt went on, "I do my best to carry out my instructions. But this strange adventure of Godfrey's happens at a most unfortunate time. Rachel has been incessantly restless and excited since she first heard of it. She left me no peace till I had written and asked my nephew Ablewhite to come here. She even feels an interest in the other person who was roughly used—Mr. Luker, or some such name—though the man is, of course, a total stranger to her."

"Your knowledge of the world, dear aunt, is superior to mine," I suggested, diffidently. "But there must be a reason surely for this extraordinary conduct on Rachel's part. She is keeping a sinful secret from you and from everybody. May there not be something in these recent events which threatens her secret with discovery?"

"Discovery?" repeated my aunt. "What can you possibly mean? Discovery through Mr. Luker? Discovery through my nephew?"

As the word passed her lips, a special providence occurred. The servant opened the door, and announced Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.

ALL ROUND ST. PAUL'S.

"You'll find it horribly dirty!" exclaimed the friend I met on Ludgate-hill, in reply to the intelligence that I was about to go over St. Paul's Cathedral for the first time. "Horribly dirty!" I repeated to myself. "Is *that* all the creature can find to say concerning Wren's masterpiece?" But, having now been from crypt to ball, and round galleries, and about nave, dirt and neglect are, I find, the most prominent characteristics of the handsomest edifice of the wealthiest city in the world. The most prominent fact connected with an inspection of the monuments is their filth. Dust which is black in its thickness rests undisturbed upon the handiwork of Chantrey and Flaxman, converting classic groups into piebald monstrosities, turning white black, and reading a bitter lesson of neglect and indifference to the looker-on. It would be ludicrous if it were not sad to note the strange metamorphoses effected by simple dirt. Black angels are conveying Ethiopian heroes to their long rest. Smutty-faced Britannias vie with much-besoiled Glories and Fames in doing honour to English worthies to whom soap and a scrubbing-brush are a first necessity. And the worst part of the effect is that the dust lies partially. Just as when a heavy fall of snow is thawing away, odd patches appear uncovered, long before the whole fall is melted; so the dust at St. Paul's lingers thickly on certain folds and features and leaves others

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untouched. One of Lord Nelson's feet is white and the other black, the latter projecting forward as if seeking a shoeblack's services. Dr. Johnson's scroll looks like a roll of music in a waterproof case, while the bare legs and blanket of that philosopher are foul with dust. The "personifications of the British Empire in Europe and Asia" round the tomb of Cornwallis are only of dusky hue, while "the other deities," said to be strikingly expressive, have become simply meaningless masks of dirt. Philanthropy and learning, valour, patriotism, and wit, are all victims of the same abominable neglect; and the strongest wish felt by the visitor who sees the Walhalla of England is that it may be speedily brushed and washed. A dozen men armed with long brooms could remove the worst part of the evil in an hour. Much of the deep-set and long-lingering filth is within reach of a pocket-handkerchief, and, but for the screens and barriers which keep the public off, we could have cleansed part of the memorials to Hallam and Collingwood without standing on tip-toe. A few amateur cleaners might relieve the City of London of a grave scandal and reproach by giving up an hour once a month to the cathedral. And the dirt I speak of is seen every day by visitors. It greets you the instant you pass under the curtains of the north door, and you never lose sight of it until you are on the stairs leading to the bell and ball. Surely, in these days of voluntary effort, it would not be difficult to organise a little staff of churchmen who would each undertake to keep a statue clean; or, if this were too much labour, who would take a leg or an arm, or a cherub or an animal, under his individual care. Few tasks would be more immediately effective, and I beg to throw out, as a suggestion to the gentlemen of London, that an amateur cleaning society be formed for the restoration of the statues of St. Paul's. For the whole matter is so easy of accomplishment that there must be some good reason why the vergers or other servants of the dean and chapter don't attempt to cope with it. If the labour were dangerous or costly—even if it involved hard work—one could understand its being shirked. But the mere application of a housemaid's duster would convert disgrace into compliment, and a cruel gibe against the dead into a national honour. Let any one who thinks our statement overdrawn look into St. Paul's the next time he is in the City. A momentary glance inside will be sufficient. The monument by Chantrey, erected at the public expense to the memories of Generals Gore and Skerrett, and that to Admiral Lord Duncan, also a tribute from the nation, are both within sight of the threshold, and both prove my case. Note their degraded condition; remark the abject grimness of Fame and Britannia in the first, and the blackness of the face and uniform and hands in the second; and say whether you do not agree with me that if ever Lord Palmerston's celebrated definition of dirt as "matter in the wrong place" applied with irresistible force, it is to the national monuments in our City cathedral. Wondering what laws would be violated and what penalty be enforced if a party of a score or so of visitors, all armed with dusters and soft hand-brushes, were to plant themselves at given portions of the interior, and at a preconcerted signal commence statue-cleaning as a labour of love, we pass up a staircase to find four able-bodied persons in a high state of jocularity. One sits at a sort of pay-place, and obligingly acts as money-changer; two others are lounging on the stairs near him, and have evidently perpetrated some jest at the expense of a fourth, who butts hastily against me on the stairs, grinning meanwhile with great good humour, and, holding up some silver coin, cries, "Were it enough, think ye?" On seeing me, the money-changer and the two loungers assume an expression of pensive interest, and all speak at once when I ask a question. "Up-stairs, sir, as far as you can go, sir, until you meet a man who'll show you the liberry, sir. Sixpence, if you please. Like to see everything, would you, sir; that will be three shillings, if you please. Sixpence to whispering and outside galleries, sixpence the liberry, sixpence to crypt, and eighteenpence to the ball. A guide-book, sir?—sixpence—three shillings and sixpence in all; and here are four tickets, which you'll give up when called upon." Mounting some spacious stairs, the stone steps of which are protected by a wooden covering, we are stopped by a man on guard, who calls "Philip;" whereupon one of the loungers presents himself from below with a consummate air of never having seen me before. The first of my sixpenny tickets is given up, and I am conducted through a long gallery, like an exaggerated lumber-room, and deposited in the library. I am turning to the guide-book I have just bought when my companion observes, pleasantly, that "I shan't find nothing about it in there," but that for one shilling he can let me have a book which not only contains the whole of my sixpenny purchase, but other information which is essential to the comprehension of St. Paul's.

"Wy didn't the other man offer you this sort, instead of takin' sixpence for what ain't much use? Can't say, sir, I'm sure; I 'avn't got nothin' to do with 'im. I sells these books myself at one shilling, and they include everything that you've got there, and a good deal more besides. Yours is for the monuments, and mine is for the monuments, and for all the rest as well. No, sir, I can't take your guide-book back in exchange. You see it's another man's business to sell that altogether, and his book wouldn't be no use to me, would it now, sir?" I take my ingenuous friend's book, and after offering him sixpence and the useless sixpenny book in vain, I become so absorbed in its contents as to forget my debt. "You haven't paid me for the guide-book, sir; and, if you please, I will take back the one you bought first," follows so soon upon the knowledge that our visit is for a public purpose, and that what we denounce as a fraudulent trick will be ex-

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posed, that the fate of country cousins and foreigners becomes additionally clear. In our case we took tickets for viewing the whole of the interior of the cathedral, and bought the only guide-book offered us. The seller, and those whom I must call his accomplices, were well aware that the work they sold would be insufficient for my purpose, and deliberately suppressed the fact of there being a more complete one until, as they thought, they had me at disadvantage, and I was under the necessity of buying both. "No, sir, not the least difficulty in getting the sixpence from the other man for this one, sir, thank you, sir. *I'll* arrange it with 'im, sir, thank you!"—all came after the discovery concerning my public duties and possible public strictures, and were as completely the reverse of the aggressive insolence of the first refusal as affirmative and negative can well be. I am sent up alone to look at the clock and the bell, and don't in the least understand either. A clockmaker is winding up the first, and informs me it is hard work, and always takes an hour. The clapper of the second and a portion of its sides are just visible through an aperture in some boards above me, and after craning my neck until it aches, I decide that I have beheld more exciting spectacles, and think myself scantily repaid for the labour of ascending one hundred additional steps. The outside of seven thousand volumes, a fine oil portrait of Bishop Compton, under whom the cathedral was built, some oak carving by Gibbons, and a flooring made up of pieces of oak inlaid without nails or pegs, are shown me in the library. A glance down the geometrical staircase, "the hundred and ten steps of which hang without visible support, all resting upon the bottom step," and we take leave of our guide, who has by this time put on a look of sheepish guilelessness, as of a simple man whose life is devoted to others, and to whom mercenary or other unworthy motives are unknown. Up more steps of the same spacious staircase as before and we come upon a shrivelled little mummy of a man whose life is spent in whispering, and who seems to have become chronically hoarse in consequence. His neck and chin are hidden in a huge muffler, which has been white, but is now of dubious hue, and his frame is hidden in a black surtout which buttons across the chest and has an air of being slept in. This old man is of a flue-y habit of body, and when he coughs or wheezes, minute particles, such as float in the air after the shaking of a feather bed, exude from his clothes and envelop him in a halo of fluff. He is eminently polite. "Walk in, sir—walk into the gallery, if *you* please," is given with a courtly bow, as if doing the honours of the whispering gallery of St. Paul's were not a thing to be undertaken lightly; and when we have walked in, the wave of the arm with which we are sent on, and the "Stop where you are now, sir, if *you* please," when we are half round, are suggestive of a faded shabby royalty, as of some stage-monarch who has fallen upon evil times. Forgetting the speciality of the place, we turn round to see who is following us so closely, and find we are deceived by our own echo. We next listen to "This church was built, &c.," in the old man's shrillest whisper, with polite enjoyment and a keen sense of relief when it is over. A young couple from the country, and, as I guess, recently from the altar, are now received by the old man with the same formula which greeted me, and are in their turn waved to the opposite side of the gallery. I watch that couple. He is a gawky, high-shouldered, red-whiskered, raw-boned, healthy, happy monster of one-and-twenty, whose brown coat looks as if it had been made for a deformed relative of stunted growth; whose hat tilts itself at the back of his head with an air of ostentatious independence, and whose hands and feet are on the scale of those which adorn the exterior of glovers' and lastmakers' shops. I pronounce him to be—I scarcely know why—a provincial pawnbroker, and wonder whether he is hard or impressionable in his business dealings. His companion is a dainty little person, whose trim figure is set off in the neatest of jackets, and whose hat and dress and gloves are in such pretty harmony as to make one exclaim for the thousandth time upon the native taste, which so often makes a woman look refined, when the male companion of her own rank out of his working clothes is no more than a bad and weak imitation of another social grade. I make these observations musingly, and from behind the railings of the gallery; for I have plodded three-quarters of the way round, and when the young couple enter I am seated, and peeping down upon the chairs and people in the nave below. Thus, without thought of concealment, I escape observation, and the young couple fancy they have the gallery to themselves. I did not find this out until the old man turned his face to the wall, and began whispering to it as before; when the awkward youth and pretty girl put their faces to the wall to listen, and show an appreciation of the contiguity which convinced me they considered themselves unobserved.

To turn my back, and after giving a sonorous "Hem!" to scuttle out of the gallery and upstairs without looking round, is the work of a moment, the old man giving me, "And a beautiful prospect you'll have, sir, so far as the weather will permit," as a parting salute. A general view of fog, and river, and roof are the strongest impressions I have of the first outside gallery. The dome from here looks as enormous, and the ball and cross as far off as from the street below, and I resume my pilgrimage up the stairs, with a strong feeling that I shall see little more from the ball than I have beheld already. Stairs give way to fixed ladders before we reach the top, and the pleasant genial guide who accompanies us there, and whose cheerful merits call for special mention, advises us to discard hat, and stick, and overcoat at a certain stage. "A little narrow for a man of your figure, sir," is the candid explanation; though what is narrow and why

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my figure is called into question are for the moment profound mysteries to me. Up ladder after ladder, the angle of each being sharper than its predecessor, and I stand panting before two iron bars, with odd out-of-the-way muscles asserting their presence in my calves, and wrists, and arms. I am to force my way through those bars, and at first this seems impossible. "Many a one had to turn back here besides you, sir—ladies in particular, for crino*line* won't compress, you know, and they can't get through. I think, though, if you stoop so as to get your body sideways between the two nuts, you may manage it with a squeege." I do manage it with a squeeze, and, panting more than ever and a little sore, am soon making my way up the final ladder and looking out upon London, between the openings below the ball. But there is something terribly uncomfortable in this perch, and I am speedily down again, for a sudden thought occurs to me: suppose I could not re-pass the iron-bars, what would be my fate? I struggle through them, however, after a degree of compression I had hitherto believed to be confined to gutta-percha toys, and descend the long ladders until I reach the place where I left my hat and coat. This is a little round chamber a few feet in diameter, and high up in the summit of the cupola. There is room for perhaps three people to walk abreast round a railing which encircles the space of an ordinary well in the centre. This space is loosely boarded over, a hole being left in it, through which my guide directs me to look. It is not a pleasant notion. To climb over the railings and to stand with nothing but some temporary boarding between you and the nave, where the people may be seen like small insects, to kneel down upon loose planks, and for one of these to jump upwards with a bang, are incidents highly discomposing to the nerves. But I undergo them without question or demur, concealing my nervousness as far as possible. I am heartily glad, however, to clamber over the railings again, and to gradually get down to the outside gallery, known as the "golden," below. One hundred and thirty-two churches are to be counted from here on a clear day; but now our view is practically bounded by some large buildings ("New offices, sir, in the neighbourhood of Lincoln's Inn") in one direction, and the Royal Exchange in the other. These two points represent the range of view on all sides; and my first impression is, that I have been here before. The panoramas and great pictures of bird's-eye views from St. Paul's are so wonderfully like reality, that any one seeing them may rest satisfied without enlarging his experience. The roofs of slate and tiles run at strange odd angles, and look very new. Ludgate-hill and Fleet-street form a tolerably straight gutter up to the point where the fog droops down and shuts them in. Newgate Market is almost cleared of its meat this Saturday afternoon, but a few blue dots are walking to and fro with what looks like raw mutton-chops upon their backs. But that the chops are as big as the creatures carrying them one would not recognise them to be carcases. Immediately below us the grass of the churchyard looks green and fresh, and I am able to recognise in the little red box upon wheels, turning the corner by the Cathedral Coffee-house, a Hammersmith omnibus, with two passengers outside. The numerous trains within ear-shot, the whistle and steam from locomotives, are points I don't remember in any panorama, and are of constant occurrence. Blackfriars, Cannon-street, and London Bridge are all busy, and it is pleasant to think of the holiday-makers behind each wreath of white smoke, who are rushing home a few hours earlier in honour of Saturday.

"No, sir, you couldn't see up to Charing-cross, not if it was ever so clear, nor yet the Strand, for there's a great bend towards the river, like a helber, just beyond Temple-bar, and that blocks the view like. Well, there *is* a good deal o' change in the look o' things since I fust began to come up here with visitors forty year ago. There's bin so many new streets and buildings that they make a show even from here; and there ain't a doubt as to the spread there's bin of London, and the way your eye has to travel before it lights on green. Oh yes, sir, you see green all round when it's fine. Fields and trees and perfect country beyond the miles of houses are just as distinct as in a picture. But of course you might come up here twenty times without getting the right sort of day, even in summer, before the fires are lit; but when you do get it, there ain't anything finer, in my opinion, in the world. No, sir, I've never been abroad, having bin kept pretty close to the cathedral during the years I've served in it, and so, perhaps, I oughtn't to argue much about the world. But I've known great travellers say so when they've come up, and I can't fancy anything much finer. Accidents since I've shown people about here? Never heard of one. We have larky young boys and girls, and ladies who are wilful and bad to manage, but none of 'em's come to harm in my time, nor before it, so far as I know. You see, the ladders are strong and firm, and, bein' boarded at the back, they're like real stairs, only narrer and steep, so that people couldn't very well slip off even if they was to try."

The bell is tolling for afternoon service when we reach the nave, and we determine to reserve our visit to the crypt for another day. Just as we reach the barrier, however, and recognise that the men who sold us guide-books have put on vergers' gowns, a brisk little person asks reproachfully whether we are going to miss the best part of the cathedral. "Time, sir? Oh yes. I'll show you through quickly. Your ticket, sir. It won't take five minutes, and we'll be up again before the service begins." Passing the tombs, below the nave, of painters, architects, and engineers, we come to the resting-place of Nelson and Wellington, and finally to the funeral car which brought the remains of the latter to their rest. Gas is kept

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burning round the massive tomb of porphyry beneath which Wellington lies, and the famous car is set off by accessories which are at once lugubrious and theatrical. Three sham horses stand in prancing attitude in its shafts, their nodding black plumes and the draperies spread out upon them being those actually used. The walls are hung with the black cloth employed at the funeral, and this is picked out with tinsel heraldry and ornament. The arms of the different orders conferred upon the departed hero, his ducal coronet, and field-marshal's bâton, are all laid out for display; and the general effect is as if the property-room of a theatre and the show-room of some fashionable mourning warehouse had been suddenly fused.

The care and formality of these arrangements make the neglected statues look filthier and more woebegone than ever as we pass out, and the fact of their standing in the only portion of the cathedral for which no admission-fee is charged does not lessen the significance of the contrast.

THE RUSSIAN PEASANTRY.

The wheels of my carriage have caught fire somewhere about midway between the Russian city of Kiev and the town of Balta. My courier is a soldier, an under officer in a regiment of Cossacks, and he takes counsel with the postilion as to the repairs necessary. I am an old traveller, and accustomed to make shifts of all kinds on the road, but I do not see how to get out of our difficulty. The case seems hopeless. The boxes of the wheels are charred and almost burnt away. Russian peasants, however, are handy fellows, and the postilion makes very light of the accident. For the last half hour since we changed horses he has sat motionless, but howling, on the coach-box, and we have galloped over a flat, monotonous country as fast as ten wiry ponies could carry us under the influence of yells, scolding, and thwacks. The thwacks have been administered in a peculiar manner. Suddenly the motionless little man has started up and applied a long stick with great vigour and decision to the back of every pony within reach of it. Then the carriage has begun to roll and sway about violently from side to side in ruts and out of ruts, jolting over stones, splashing through quagmires, till at last the wheels caught fire, and we come to a dead stop, as I have said. What on earth the Cossack soldier and the postilion are about with the springs and axletree of the carriage I have never been able to ascertain, but they seem quite at home at their work. The horses stand at ease — a disorderly little mob, and the cries which worried them five minutes ago are silent, the sharp stinging stick is still. There are the two peasants mute, and busy as ants. The Cossack soldier, a smart dapper little man, neat and trim as may be, with the breast of his coat all covered with medals and military decorations, nevertheless produces from his pocket a long piece of tallow candle. The postilion unties the rope which has served him for a belt, and nimbly picks it to pieces. They apply the tow thus produced well greased with tallow to the blackened wheels, and then so manage to tie and bind them as to produce a very workmanlike effect. In short, we are able to continue our journey, and I prepare to take my seat, and resume a doze interrupted by this unexpected halt. Suddenly, the little soldier surprises me by dropping down swiftly on both his knees, and holding his uplifted hands together in the attitude of prayer. He looks a queer, stiff figure, like a wooden man, or a puppet moved by machinery. He remains silent, but suppliant. On inquiry it appears that he wishes to sit behind the carriage on the footboard instead of in front, as he usually does, for parade purposes, in order that he may watch the wheels in case they should catch fire again. He merely prefers this request on his knees as a matter of custom and habit. It is his way of being civil after the usual manner of his class and country, nothing more. When he was with his regiment, if he had put a question to his colonel without this formality he would have probably fared badly. He has remembered the lessons of his early life, and will remember them as long as he is capable of recollecting anything. When this little affair is settled, he has another also to perform, which he considers part of his professional duty as body-guard in charge of my safety. It is to thump the postilion. The man has done nothing wrong, but a mischance has happened, and therefore concludes his fellow-slave, somebody must be punished. The postilion takes his thumping in very good part. It is bestowed upon him without any passion or opprobrium, in a business-like sort of way, and as something necessary for his good. It would never occur to a Russian peasant to bandy blows or words with a soldier in uniform, under any provocation whatever, although they might both have been born and bred in the same village. A uniform is far too sacred a symbol to be touched by the hottest and angriest hand. When the beating is over, the postilion climbs up on to the coach-box, recommences his howling noises as before, and on we roll to the next station, a market town in the corn countries.

On entering the post-house I find the little soldier is already before me, on his knees near a picture of the Virgin, illuminated by a small oil lamp constantly burning. No Russian peasant's house is without some such picture in the best room of it; and all who go in and out cross themselves devoutly when they look at it. My soldier is now crossing himself all over with extreme rapidity as if to make the most of his time, or to fulfil a vow. When he rises from his knees he explains to me that we shall find it impossible to continue our journey that night, and that he has just been returning thanks to all his saints for our safe arrival. He observes, however, that he had no real apprehension of danger owing to the intervention of

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a small pocket saint which he bought of a holy man in the Kiev catacombs, and has ever since carried about with him; the saint in question being an infallible protector of travellers.

So, as I am about to pass a night at the post-house, I begin to examine my quarters. It is a long, low, whitewashed building of only one story high, but standing with its outhouses and stabling upon considerably more than an acre of ground. It is a straggling, infirm, unsubstantial place, partly in ruins; but all its imperfections are covered by the omnipresent whitewash. My luggage has been conveyed to a small, dark den of a room, so full of close air, and empty of comfort that there is no temptation to remain in it. So leaving the Cossack to mount guard over my goods, and to protect them from light fingers, I wander out into the town; and make my way towards the market-place, where the manners of a people are always seen to most advantage. The market is held on a large open pace where some disorderly huts and tents have been set up. Very little of an edible nature is sold there, and nothing at all nice or tempting. There are some lean, damp fowls in hen-coops, and some geese of disconsolate aspect tied by the leg together, and worn slung over the shoulder of the seller head downwards till they find a purchaser. Some white cabbages and a few onions complete the marketable stock in trade of a considerable town. There is no life or bustle anywhere, and the mud under foot is so deep and stiff as to render walking laborious and unpleasant. There is nothing for it but to go back to the post-house and make the most of a dull afternoon, while my carriage is being mended. Returning to the post-house, I notice that the only visible shops are a chemist's and a tea-room. There are very few people about the streets; hardly any indeed, though they are all wider than Piccadilly. It looks inexpressibly melancholy to see only one or two people dotted about them at long intervals; and those in the grey sullen light of a Russian day seem lost and unhappy.

I am hungry, and the thoughts of dinner present themselves to my mind with increasing frequency and attraction every minute. There is no eager host about the place, however; no brisk waiter. My room being now sufficiently sweetened to admit of examination is found to contain an insecure wooden bedstead without mattress or bedding, a rickety table, a pie dish, an empty tumbler, and a chair. Nothing more. There is no bell or other means of summoning the natives All communication with the outer world must be made by means of bawling till somebody comes. Nobody appearing, in answer to my first series of shouts, the Cossack walks on tiptoe to a corner where he has left the stick which is his councillor in every difficulty, and sallies forth in quest of a pair of shoulders to fit it.

There is little doubt that if in the present altered state of the Russian law I were myself to raise a finger against any of the bumpkins lounging about I should never hear the last of it. I know well that an Italian cook, who gave a chance blow to one of his scullions, had lately to pay altogether an unreasonable sum for his enjoyment. But my Cossack walks up to the first man he meets and pummels him without mercy or remonstrance. The man being duly awakened by this process becomes instantly endowed with the conversational faculty which had previously lain dormant in his mind. Being then informed that the post-master, or somebody belonging to his establishment, is required to get something to eat, he cheerfully expresses his willingness to go in search of one or both of them. Half an hour is dawdled away, and nobody coming in reply to this message, the Cossack and I set forth on an expedition of discovery. After roaming for some time about the nooks and passages of the interminable range of buildings which form the post-house, we at last come upon a smoky den whence issue low sounds of muttered talk. The Cossack puts a forefinger to his lips in a knowing manner, and then points to the door, before which, coiled up in a ball like a dormouse, crouches our messenger, waiting for an answer to his communication. He motions silently towards the interior of the room, and we enter. There sits the postmaster with his head tied up in a red handkerchief, and a cigar between his lips, playing with a personal friend at the exciting game of double dummy. Fortunately for that postmaster the superior authorities at St. Petersburg some years ago found it necessary to confer upon his order throughout Russia an official rank sufficiently high to protect them from beatings. The backs of all the postmasters in the empire had been made so sore by the consequences of their supine behaviour that this measure was found indispensable, or the card-playing pair would have infallibly come to grief on the present occasion. As it is my little Cossack makes himself and his medals felt rather oppressively, and the postmaster turns white and begins to shake like a man with the ague; for the fact is, I am travelling with a way-bill having two seals, which is a sort of certificate that my business is of importance to the Imperial Government, and that any one who hinders or troubles me is likely to suffer for it. No sooner is this mysterious document produced than all becomes smooth. The post-master has got no dinner himself, he never has had, and never will have any; but he will send to the local prince's German land agent, who will supply me at once with all things necessary. So by-and-by comes a good homely dinner and a bottle of brave German wine; and then a little later comes the agent himself to bear me company.

The agent is a baldheaded gentlemanly man, who has passed the early part of his life in medical studies, and has a strong passion for the pursuit of investigations in comparative anatomy. He knows nothing whatever about the management of land, but having been exiled from the Austrian dominions, because his brother

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was suspected of having taken part in some Hungarian revolt, he travelled, not knowing where else to go, down the Lower Danube, intending to make halt in Roumania, and there continue the practice of his profession. But happening to meet a Russian prince on the steamer, he found that this impressionable magnate had just become convinced that all Germans were born farmers, and after a very brief acquaintance, he proposed that the physician should take the place of one of his own countrymen, who had nearly ruined the prince by an abuse of trust. This, briefly, was the agent's history, and when he had told it in a pleasant, dry, humorous, German way, he proposed that we should go and take tea with his wife. We made quite a civilised party in the wilderness, but the agent had a sad account to give of his charge.

"We, my wife and I, have done all we can," he said, "to render ourselves popular. We have tried to introduce dairy farming, and many other things which I have learned from books. For although I did not know much of agriculture when I came here, I have since tried to instruct myself, and in learning to teach others. We have oppressed and worried nobody, and done the best we could for our neighbours in a small way. But they all get tipsy, and care for nothing but drink. They will not work for money nor persuasion. They are so dull of intelligence that they are not to be trusted with the management of the simplest steam machinery by which their labour might be replaced; and whenever they get offended, they revenge themselves by burning down the barns where our corn is housed. I have tried to entice some of my countrymen here, to form a small colony, but there is a strong and growing prejudice against foreigners in Russia; and it is not altogether unreasonable. When an ordinary labouring man from any civilised country comes here, he sees so much ignorance and barbarism around him, that, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, his head gets quite turned by constantly comparing his own small acquirements with the utter darkness and savagery of all with whom he comes in contact. The Russian language, too, being difficult to learn, he finds himself cut off from all social intercourse; and there being no local opinion to restrain him he usually takes to drink, and becomes far worse and more unmanageable than a native. In a word, after having tried all I could for ten years to benefit my employer, I am about to give up my efforts in despair; and when I leave this place the estate will probably fall entirely out of cultivation. Nothing can be done at present with the emancipated serfs. Nothing ever will be done with them till they are brought to their senses by some awful visitation of famine. As it is we cannot even get a domestic servant. With the peasantry, freedom means simply, total idleness."

And then the kindly German lady tells her story. How she was deluded to come into Russia by an advertisement and a sham baron. How she found herself at the end of her journey at a distant village remote from civilised help, and was there ill treated, outraged, and nearly starved. How she at length succeeded in escaping in disguise, and was brought here by a benevolent Jewish carrier. How her present husband gave her home and shelter, watched her through a long illness brought on by hardship, and married her when she recovered. Then she tells how they have lived cut off from all intellectual resources, without friends, without amusement, far from intelligent speech and interchange of thought. How the few words they hear are mostly sordid and unsympathetic. How all grace and charm have been banished from their lives; till they are glad to leave a place which has been little better than a tomb to them, leaving no friendships, no regrets, behind them.

On going back to the post-house, after an evening spent in this way, I find that my kind host has had the forethought to send me some bedding; and two hulking men are arranging it in an uncouth sort of way as I come in. There is no such thing as a chambermaid in Russia. Women generally are rare and shy, much of the Asiatic feeling as to the propriety of their seclusion prevailing in the national mind. Women may be found in the fields driving oxen, sowing seed, and gleaning corn. They may be found sheep-shearing, wool-washing, or even following the plough—harsh-voiced, coarse, flat-faced things, with small lustreless eyes, wide nostrils, and large mouths. Women also may be found at court and in ball-rooms blazing with jewels and daintily arrayed. But in the home life of the middle classes they seem to disappear altogether. Now and then by accident a withered old hag with bare legs will be observed carrying firewood for the stoves, or doing some rough menial work; but a smart little maid, all smiles and blushes, or a comely dame with a bonny welcome in her face, is never seen by a visitor in the house of a Russian under the rank of a prince; and then only because the higher classes of travelled people have copied foreign manners; for even princes, when they live in out-of-the-way places, shut up their wives and daughters as jealously as Turks. This is how it comes that two clumsy louts are making my bed. I am too thankful to have a bed at all. It is a very scarce thing in Russia. Many Muscovite celebrities never think of going to bed. They do not know how to go to bed, most of them. An ex-governor-general of St. Petersburg and a minister of state were both discovered between sheets at one of the late emperor's palaces in full uniform with their jack-boots and spurs on. A Russian peasant scarcely knows what the use of a bed means. He rolls himself up in his sheepskin anywhere and everywhere, and sleeps till he is hungry. He has no fixed hours of rest; and is as likely to be asleep at noonday as awake at midnight. A Russian household is never all asleep or all awake at the same time. However, my bed is made at last and I am

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alone, with the Cossack rolled up, dozing but watchful, at the door. And so I take some companionable book out of my portmanteau and read myself off to sleep.

It must be somewhere about two or three o'clock in the morning when I am awoke by a sense of near danger, and, starting up in bed, I look round the room. There is nothing visible, but I fancy I hear a slight noise, and listen for some time attentively. I can distinguish nothing but the regular breathing of the Cossack soldier on the other side of the door, and so, becoming convinced that nightmare has startled me, I go off to sleep again till morning. Then the mystery is explained. Everything portable is gone. My clothes, my watch, whatever has been left about has been stolen. Yet the Cossack soldier never moved from his post, and the thing seems incredible till a stream of cold air makes me look towards the window, and then the manner in which the robbery has been effected is plain enough. One of the panes of glass has been removed, and as there are no shutters to the window a little country lout has been passed through, according to a common practice among Russian thieves, and has stripped the room of its contents too stealthily even to attract the attention of the watchful soldier on guard within a few feet of him. Had I not awoke at the right time I might very probably have been deprived even of my bedclothes and sleeve buttons. If the Russian peasant displayed only one-tenth part of the ingenuity with which he can consummate a robbery, in his own legitimate concerns, he might be a prosperous man. But his aversion to honest toil is unconquerable, and his love of thieving inborn, and surprising as to its dexterity.

HOLIDAY ROMANCE.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

IN FOUR PARTS.

PART IV.

ROMANCE. FROM THE PEN OF MISS NETTIE ASHFORD.*

THERE is a country, which I will show you when I get into Maps, where the children have everything their own way. It is a most delightful country to live in. The grown-up people are obliged to obey the children, and are never allowed to sit up to supper, except on their birthdays. The children order them to make jam and jelly and marmalade, and tarts and pies and puddings and all manner of pastry. If they say they won't, they are put in the corner till they do. They are sometimes allowed to have some, but when they have some, they generally have powders given them afterwards.

One of the inhabitants of this country, a truly sweet young creature of the name of Mrs. Orange, had the misfortune to be sadly plagued by her numerous family. Her parents required a great deal of looking after, and they had connexions and companions who were scarcely ever out of mischief. So Mrs. Orange said to herself, "I really cannot be troubled with these Torments any longer, I must put them all to school."

Mrs. Orange took off her pinafore, and dressed herself very nicely, and took up her baby, and went out to call upon another lady of the name of Mrs. Lemon, who kept a Preparatory Establishment. Mrs. Orange stood upon the scraper to pull at the bell, and gave a Ring-ting-ting.

Mrs. Lemon's neat little housemaid, pulling up her socks as she came along the passage, answered the Ring-ting-ting.

"Good morning," said Mrs. Orange. "Fine day. How do you do? Mrs. Lemon at home?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Will you say Mrs. Orange and baby?"

"Yes, ma'am. Walk in."

Mrs. Orange's baby was a very fine one, and real wax all over. Mrs. Lemon's baby was leather and bran. However, when Mrs. Lemon came into the drawing-room with her baby in her arms, Mrs. Orange said politely, "Good morning. Fine day. How do you do? And how is little Tootleum-Boots?"

"Well, she is but poorly. Cutting her teeth, ma'am," said Mrs. Lemon.

"Oh, indeed, ma'am!" said Mrs. Orange. "No fits, I hope?"

"No, ma'am."

"How many teeth has she, ma'am?"

"Five, ma'am."

"My Emilia, ma'am, has eight," said Mrs. Orange. "Shall we lay them on the mantelpiece side by side, while we converse?"

"By all means, ma'am," said Mrs. Lemon. "Hem!"

"The first question is, ma'am," said Mrs. Orange—"I don't bore you?"

"Not in the least, ma'am," said Mrs. Lemon. "Far from it, I assure you."

"Then pray *have* you," said Mrs. Orange, "*have* you any vacancies?"

"Yes, ma'am. How many might you require?"

"Why, the truth is, ma'am," said Mrs. Orange, "I have come to the conclusion that my children"—O I forgot to say that they call the grown-up people, children, in that country—"that my children are getting positively too much for me. Let me see. Two parents, two intimate friends of theirs, one godfather, two godmothers, and an aunt. *Have* you as many as eight vacancies?"

"I have just eight, ma'am," said Mrs. Lemon.

"Most fortunate! Terms moderate, I think?"

"Very moderate, ma'am."

"Diet good, I believe?"

"Excellent, ma'am."

"Unlimited?"

"Unlimited."

"Most satisfactory! Corporal punishment dispensed with?"

"Why, we do occasionally shake," said Mrs.

* Aged half-past six.

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Lemon, "and we have slapped. But only in extreme cases."

"*Could* I, ma'am," said Mrs. Orange, "*could* I see the establishment?"

"With the greatest of pleasure, ma'am," said Mrs. Lemon.

Mrs. Lemon took Mrs. Orange into the school-room, where there were a number of pupils. "Stand up, children!" said Mrs. Lemon, and they all stood up.

Mrs. Orange whispered to Mrs. Lemon, "There is a pale bald child with red whiskers, in disgrace. Might I ask what he has done?"

"Come here, White," said Mrs. Lemon, "and tell this lady what you have been doing."

"Betting on horses," said White, sulkily.

"Are you sorry for it, you naughty child?" said Mrs. Lemon.

"No," said White. "Sorry to lose, but shouldn't be sorry to win."

"There's a vicious boy for you, ma'am," said Mrs. Lemon. "Go along with you, sir. This is Brown, Mrs. Orange. Oh, a sad case, Brown's! Never knows when he has had enough. Greedy. How is your gout, sir?"

"Bad," said Brown.

"What else can you expect?" said Mrs. Lemon. "Your stomach is the size of two. Go and take exercise directly. Mrs. Black, come here to me. Now here is a child, Mrs. Orange, ma'am, who is always at play. She can't be kept at home a single day together; always gadding about and spoiling her clothes. Play, play, play, play, from morning to night, and to morning again. How can she expect to improve!"

"Don't expect to improve," sulked Mrs. Black. "Don't want to."

"There is a specimen of her temper, ma'am," said Mrs. Lemon. "To see her when she is tearing about, neglecting everything else, you would suppose her to be at least good-humoured. But bless you, ma'am, she is as pert and as flouncing a minx as ever you met with in all your days!"

"You must have a great deal of trouble with them, ma'am," said Mrs. Orange.

"Ah! I have indeed, ma'am," said Mrs. Lemon. "What with their tempers, what with their quarrels, what with their never knowing what's good for them, and what with their always wanting to domineer, deliver me from these unreasonable children!"

"Well, I wish you good morning, ma'am," said Mrs. Orange.

"Well, I wish you good morning, ma'am," said Mrs. Lemon.

So Mrs. Orange took up her baby and went home, and told the family that plagued her so that they were all going to be sent to school. They said they didn't want to go to school, but she packed up their boxes and packed them off.

"Oh dear me, dear me! Rest and be thankful!" said Mrs. Orange, throwing herself back in her little arm-chair. "Those troublesome troubles are got rid of, please the Pigs!"

Just then another lady named Mrs. Alicumpaine came calling at the street-door with a Ring-ting-ting.

"My dear Mrs. Alicumpaine," said Mrs. Orange, "how do you do? Pray stay to dinner. We have but a simple joint of sweet stuff, followed by a plain dish of bread and treacle, but if you will take us as you find us it will be *so* kind!"

"Don't mention it," said Mrs. Alicumpaine. "I shall be too glad. But what do you think I have come for, ma'am? Guess, ma'am."

"I really cannot guess, ma'am," said Mrs. Orange.

"Why, I am going to have a small juvenile party to-night," said Mrs. Alicumpaine, "and if you and Mr. Orange and baby would but join us, we should be complete."

"More than charmed, I am sure!" said Mrs. Orange.

"So kind of you!" said Mrs. Alicumpaine. "But I hope the children won't bore you?"

"Dear things! Not at all," said Mrs. Orange. "I dote upon them."

Mr. Orange here came home from the city, and he came too with a Ring-ting-ting.

"James, love," said Mrs. Orange, "you look tired. What has been doing in the city to-day?"

"Trap bat and ball, my dear," said Mr. Orange, "and it knocks a man up."

"That dreadfully anxious city, ma'am," said Mrs. Orange to Mrs. Alicumpaine; "so wearing, is it not?"

"Oh, so trying!" said Mrs. Alicumpaine. "John has lately been speculating in the peg-top ring, and I often say to him at night, 'John, *is* the result worth the wear and tear?'"

Dinner was ready by this time, so they sat down to dinner; and while Mr. Orange carved the joint of sweet-stuff, he said, "It's a poor heart that never rejoices. Jane, go down to the cellar and fetch a bottle of the Upest Ginger-beer."

At tea-time Mr. and Mrs. Orange, and baby, and Mrs. Alicumpaine, went off to Mrs. Alicumpaine's house. The children had not come yet, but the ball-room was ready for them, decorated with paper flowers.

"How very sweet!" said Mrs. Orange. "The dear things! How pleased they will be!"

"I don't care for children myself," said Mr. Orange, gaping.

"Not for girls?" said Mrs. Alicumpaine. "Come! You care for girls?"

Mr. Orange shook his head and gaped again. "Frivolous and vain, ma'am."

"My dear James," cried Mrs. Orange, who had been peeping about, "do look here. Here's the supper for the darlings, ready laid in the room behind the folding-doors. Here's their little pickled salmon, I do declare! And here's their little salad, and their little roast beef and fowls, and their little pastry, and their wee, wee, wee, champagne!"

"Yes, I thought it best, ma'am," said Mrs. Alicumpaine, "that they should have their supper by themselves. Our table is in the corner

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here, where the gentlemen can have their wine-glass of negus and their egg-sandwich, and their quiet game at beggar-my-neighbour, and look on. As for us, ma'am, we shall have quite enough to do to manage the company."

"Oh, indeed you may say so. Quite enough, ma'am!" said Mrs. Orange.

The company began to come. The first of them was a stout boy, with a white top-knot and spectacles. The housemaid brought him in and said, "Compliments, and at what time was he to be fetched?" Mrs. Alicumpaine said, "Not a moment later than ten. How do you do, sir? Go and sit down." Then a number of other children came; boys by themselves, and girls by themselves, and boys and girls together. They didn't behave at all well. Some of them looked through quizzing-glasses at others, and said, "Who are those? Don't know them." Some of them looked through quizzing-glasses at others, and said, "How do?" Some of them had cups of tea or coffee handed to them by others, and said, "Thanks! Much!" A good many boys stood about, and felt their shirt-collars. Four tiresome fat boys *would* stand in the doorway and talk about the newspapers, till Mrs. Alicumpaine went to them and said, "My dears, I really cannot allow you to prevent people from coming in. I shall be truly sorry to do it, but, if you put yourselves in everybody's way, I must positively send you home." One boy, with a beard and a large white waistcoat, who stood straddling on the hearth-rug warming his coat-tails, *was* sent home. "Highly incorrect, my dear," said Mrs. Alicumpaine, handing him out of the room, "and I cannot permit it."

There was a children's band—harp, cornet, and piano—and Mrs. Alicumpaine and Mrs. Orange bustled among the children to persuade them to take partners and dance. But they were so obstinate! For quite a long time they would not be persuaded to take partners and dance. Most of the boys said, "Thanks. Much. But not at present." And most of the rest of the boys said, "Thanks. Much. But never do."

"Oh! These children are very wearing," said Mrs. Alicumpaine to Mrs. Orange.

"Dear things! I dote upon them, but they ARE wearing," said Mrs. Orange to Mrs. Alicumpaine.

At last they did begin in a slow and melancholy way to slide about to the music, though even then they wouldn't mind what they were told, but would have this partner, and wouldn't have that partner, and showed temper about it. And they wouldn't smile, no not on any account they wouldn't; but when the music stopped, went round and round the room in dismal twos, as if everybody else was dead.

"Oh! It's very hard indeed to get these vexing children to be entertained," said Mrs. Alicumpaine to Mrs. Orange.

"I dote upon the darlings, but it IS hard," said Mrs. Orange to Mrs. Alicumpaine.

They were trying children, that's the truth. First, they wouldn't sing when they were asked, and then, when everybody fully believed they wouldn't, they would. "If you serve us so any more, my love," said Mrs. Alicumpaine to a tall child, with a good deal of white back, in mauve silk trimmed with lace, "it will be my painful privilege to offer you a bed, and to send you to it immediately."

The girls were so ridiculously dressed, too, that they were in rags before supper. How could the boys help treading on their trains? And yet when their trains were trodden on, they often showed temper again, and looked as black, they did! However, they all seemed to be pleased when Mrs. Alicumpaine said, "Supper is ready, children!" And they went crowding and pushing in, as if they had had dry bread for dinner.

"How are the children getting on?" said Mr. Orange to Mrs. Orange, when Mrs. Orange came to look after baby. Mrs. Orange had left Baby on a shelf near Mr. Orange while he played at Beggar-my-Neighbour, and had asked him to keep his eye upon her now and then.

"Most charmingly, my dear!" said Mrs. Orange. "So droll to see their little flirtations and jealousies! Do come and look!"

"Much obliged to you, my dear," said Mr. Orange, "but I don't care about children myself."

So Mrs. Orange, having seen that baby was safe, went back without Mr. Orange to the room where the children were having supper.

"What are they doing now?" said Mrs. Orange to Mrs. Alicumpaine.

"They are making speeches and playing at Parliament," said Mrs. Alicumpaine to Mrs. Orange.

On hearing this, Mrs. Orange set off once more back again to Mr. Orange, and said "James dear, do come. The children are playing Parliament."

"Thank you, my dear," said Mr. Orange, "but I don't care about Parliament myself."

So Mrs. Orange went once again without Mr. Orange to the room where the children were having supper, to see them playing at Parliament. And she found some of the boys crying "Hear, hear, hear!" while other boys cried "No, no!" and others "Question!" "Spoke!" and all sorts of nonsense that ever you heard. Then one of those tiresome fat boys who had stopped the doorway, told them he was on his legs (as if they couldn't see that he wasn't on his head, or on his anything else) to explain, and that with the permission of his honourable friend, if he would allow him to call him so (another tiresome boy bowed), he would proceed to explain. Then he went on for a long time in a sing-song (whatever he meant!), did this troublesome fat boy, about that he held in his hand a glass, and about that he had come down to that house that night to discharge what he would call a public duty, and about that on the present occasion he would lay his hand (his other hand) upon his heart, and would tell honourable gentlemen that he was about to open the door to general approval. Then he opened the door by saying "To our hostess!"

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and everybody else said "To our hostess!" and then there were cheers. Then another tiresome boy started up in sing-song, and then half a dozen noisy and nonsensical boys at once. But at last Mrs. Alicumpaine said, "I cannot have this din. Now, children, you have played at Parliament very nicely, but Parliament gets tiresome after a little while, and it's time you left off, for you will soon be fetched."

After another dance (with more tearing to rags than before supper) they began to be fetched, and you will be very glad to be told that the tiresome fat boy who had been on his legs was walked off first without any ceremony. When they were all gone, poor Mrs. Alicumpaine dropped upon a sofa and said to Mrs. Orange, "These children will be the death of me at last, ma'am, they will indeed!"

"I quite adore them, ma'am," said Mrs. Orange, "but they DO want variety."

Mr. Orange got his hat, and Mrs. Orange got her bonnet and her baby, and they set out to walk home. They had to pass Mrs. Lemon's Preparatory Establishment on their way.

"I wonder, James dear," said Mrs. Orange, looking up at the window, "whether the precious children are asleep!"

"I don't much care whether they are or not, myself," said Mr. Orange.

"James dear!"

"You dote upon them, you know," said Mr. Orange. "That's another thing."

"I do!" said Mrs. Orange, rapturously. "Oh I DO!"

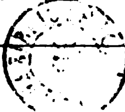
"I don't," said Mr. Orange.

"But I was thinking, James love," said Mrs. Orange, pressing his arm, "whether our dear good kind Mrs. Lemon would like them to stay the holidays with her."

"If she was paid for it, I dare say she would," said Mr. Orange.

"I adore them, James," said Mrs. Orange; "but SUPPOSE we pay her then!"

This was what brought that country to such perfection, and made it such a delightful place to live in; the grown-up people (that would be in other countries) soon left off being allowed any holidays after Mr. and Mrs. Orange tried the experiment; and the children (that would be in other countries) kept them at school as long as ever they lived, and made them do whatever they were told.



FARADAY.

NONE appreciate the beauties of music so thoroughly as those who make it. Much as a brilliant experiment delights an audience, it gratifies the experimenter even more. Nothing, therefore, can be more appropriate or welcome than a sketch of the labours of a master discoverer, by a masterly exponent of scientific discovery.

When Dr. Tyndall gives us a book, it is something better than Science Made Easy, being science rendered irresistibly attractive, without any false pretensions to easiness. The reader *must* climb the hill before him. Its height and steepness are not concealed by any fog of ignorance or haze of assumption; but a friendly guide helps him over rugged places, avowing their difficulty and encouraging his efforts to surmount them. Moreover, the points which the guide himself cannot attain, he plainly states that he really cannot, holding out no delusive hope of their being ever accessible. "Though the progress and development of science may seem to be unlimited, there is a region apparently beyond her reach—a line, with which she does not even tend to osculate. . . Having exhausted physics, and reached its very rim, the real mystery yet looms beyond us. And thus it will ever loom—ever beyond the bourne of man's intellect."*

In the present instance there is the same able teaching, and the same modest and prudent reserve. There is no professed attempt to lay before the world a *life* of Faraday in the ordinary acceptation of the term. Such personal traits only are introduced as are necessary to complete the picture of the *philosopher*,† though by no means adequate to give a complete idea of the *man*. Faraday as a Discoverer, is a lecture given in print, instead of being spoken vivâ voce. It is a dictation lesson, every sentence of which will be eagerly caught up and reverently remembered. It is an outpouring of the heart, a relief of the memory, by one full of his subject to overflowing. The earnest love of the biographer proves (if any such proof were necessary) the sterling value of his departed friend.

Michael Faraday was born at Newington Butts on the 22nd of September, 1791, and died at Hampton Court, on the 25th of August, 1867. Dr. Tyndall—believing in the general truth of the doctrine of hereditary transmission, and sharing Mr. Carlyle's opinion, that "a really able man never proceeded from entirely stupid parents"—once used the privilege of his intimacy with Mr. Faraday to ask him whether his parents showed any signs of unusual ability. He could remember none. His father was a great sufferer during the latter years of his life, and that might have masked whatever intellectual power he possessed. But mental capability will often remain latent, until something special occurs to call it into action. Even when driven to exercise its faculties, its highest manifestations are not always produced. Lord Lytton (in his Student) says that an author's best works may be those which he has *not* written, but only projected.

In 1804, when thirteen years old, Faraday was apprenticed to a bookseller and binder, with whom he spent eight years of his life; after which, he worked as a journeyman else-

* Heat as a mode of motion.

† Faraday loved this word, and employed it to the last; he had an intense dislike to the modern term *physicist*. In one of his early letters we find, "I was formerly a bookseller and binder, but am now turned philosopher."

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where. But with whatever employer, his heart was in the highlands. It was in the books he bound, in the hours after work, that he found the beginning of his philosophy. There were two that especially helped him: the Encyclopædia Britannica, from which he gained his first notions of electricity, and Mrs. Marcet's Conversations on Chemistry, which gave him his foundation in that science. Introduced to Sir Humphry Davy's last lectures at the Royal Institution, he took notes of them, wrote them fairly out, and sent them to Davy, entreating him to enable him to quit trade, which he detested, and to pursue science, which he loved.

Davy (be it never forgotten) wrote to Faraday at once, and afterwards, when an opportunity occurred, made him his assistant. Showing to an influential friend this application from "a youth of twenty-two years of age," he said, "Pepys, what am I to do? Here is a letter from a young man named Faraday. He has been attending my lectures, and wants me to give him employment at the Royal Institution. *What can I do?*"

"*Do?*" replied Pepys; "put him to wash bottles; if he is good for anything, he will do it directly; if he refuses, he is good for nothing."

"No, no," replied Davy, "we must try him with something better than that." The result was, that Davy engaged him to assist in the laboratory at *weekly* wages.

Subsequently, Faraday accompanied Sir Humphry to Rome, in the capacity of philosophical assistant. On returning, he was re-engaged by the managers of the Royal Institution on the 15th of May, 1815. Here he made rapid progress in chemistry, and after a time was entrusted by Davy with easy analyses. In those days the Royal Institution published The Quarterly Journal of Science. In that journal, in 1816, Faraday's first contribution to science appeared. It was an analysis of some caustic lime from Tuscany, which had been sent to Davy by the Duchess of Montrose. In 1818, he experimented upon "sounding flames." Professor Auguste de la Rive, father of our present excellent De la Rive, had investigated those sounding flames, and had applied to them an explanation which completely accounted for a class of sounds discovered by De la Rive himself. By a few simple and conclusive experiments, Faraday proved that the explanation was insufficient. It is an epoch in a young man's life—Dr. Tyndall shrewdly observes—when he finds himself correcting a person of eminence; and in Faraday's case, where its effect was to develop a modest self-trust, such an event could not fail to act profitably.

In 1820, Faraday published a chemical paper "On two new compounds of chlorine and carbon, and on a new compound of iodine, carbon, and hydrogen," which was read before the Royal Society on the 21st of December, 1820. This was the first of his productions that was honoured with a place in the Philosophical Transactions. On the 12th of June, 1821, he married, and obtained leave to bring his young wife into his rooms at the Royal Institution, Mrs. Faraday then being twenty-one and he nearly thirty years of age. There for forty-six years they lived together, occupying the suite of apartments which had been previously in the successive occupancy of Young, Davy, and Brande. Regarding this marriage, Dr. Tyndall quotes an entry written in Faraday's own hand in his book of diplomas. "25th January, 1847.—Amongst these records and events, I here insert the date of one which, as a source of honour and happiness, far exceeds all the rest. We were *married* on June 12, 1821." This is one proof, amongst many others, of an honourable feature of Faraday's character. In his relations to his wife, he added *chivalry* to affection.

Further illustrations of character are given in a concluding heartfelt and affectionate chapter, from which we will cite only two leading points—his independent spirit, and his preference of knowledge to worldly gain. The first was especially manifested when Sir Robert Peel, in 1835, wished to offer Faraday a pension. That great statesman, however, quitted office before he was able to realise his intention. The minister who founded those pensions intended them to be marks of honour, which even proud men might accept without compromise of independence. Nevertheless, when the intimation first reached Faraday in an unofficial way, he wrote a letter announcing his determination to decline the pension, and stating that he was quite competent to earn his livelihood himself. That letter still exists, but it was never sent; Faraday's repugnance having been overruled by his friends.

When Lord Melbourne came into office, he desired to see Faraday. Probably, in utter ignorance of the man—for, unhappily for both parties, ministers of state in England are only too often ignorant of great Englishmen—his lordship said something that must have deeply displeased his visitor. The term "humbug," it appears, was incautiously employed, and other expressions were used of a similar kind. Faraday quitted the minister with his own resolves, and that evening he left his card with a short and decisive note at Lord Melbourne's residence, stating that he had manifestly mistaken his lordship's intention of honouring science in his person, and declining to have anything whatever to do with the proposed pension.

The good-humoured nobleman at first considered the matter a capital joke; but he was afterwards led to look at it more seriously. An excellent lady, who was a friend both to Faraday and the minister, tried to arrange matters between them; but she found Faraday very difficult to move from the position he had assumed. After many fruitless efforts, she at length begged of him to state what he would require of Lord Melbourne to induce him to change his mind. He replied, "I should require from his lordship what I have no right or reason

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to expect that he would grant—a written apology for the words he permitted himself to use to me." The required apology came, frank and full, creditable alike to the prime minister and the philosopher.

Next, as to his utter want of greed: Faraday once confided to Dr. Tyndall that at a certain period of his career, he was *forced* definitely to ask himself, and finally to decide, whether he should make wealth or science the pursuit of his life. It was a second Choice of Hercules. He could not serve both masters; he was therefore compelled to choose between them. After the discovery of magneto-electricity, his fame was so noised abroad that the commercial world would hardly have considered any remuneration too high for the aid of abilities like his. Even before he became so famous, he had done a little "professional business." This was the phrase he applied to his purely commercial work. His friend, Richard Phillips, for example, had induced him to undertake a number of analyses, which produced, in the year 1830, an addition to his income of more than a thousand pounds; and in 1831 a still larger sum. He had only to will it, in 1832, to raise his professional business income to five thousand a year. This indeed is a wholly insufficient estimate of what he might, with ease, have realised annually during the last thirty years of his life.

Instead of this, Dr. Tyndall states on his own responsibility, and after the inspection of Faraday's accounts, that in 1832 his professional business income dwindled down to one hundred and fifty-five pounds, nine shillings. From this it fell, with slight oscillations, to zero in 1838. Between 1839 and 1845, it never, except in one instance, exceeded twenty-two pounds, being for the most part much below that sum. The exceptional year referred to was that in which he and Sir Charles Lyell were engaged by Government to write a report on the Haswell Colliery explosion; and then his business income rose to one hundred and twelve pounds. From the end of 1845 to the day of his death, Faraday's annual professional business income was exactly zero. Taking the duration of his life into account, the son of a blacksmith and apprentice to a bookbinder had to decide between a fortune of a hundred and fifty thousand pounds on the one side, and his undowered science on the other. He chose the latter, and died a poor man. But his was the glory of holding aloft among the nations the scientific name of England during a period of forty years.

Faraday disliked "doubtful knowledge." He was possessed of a lively imagination, and could have believed in the Arabian Nights as easily as in the Encyclopædia; but facts were important to him, and saved him. He could trust a fact, and always cross-examined an assertion. Hence his habit of testing everything by experiment and of fixing his attention on the essential points of the subject under investigation, which is recorded in Dr. Tyndall's work on Sound.

"By attention," he says, "even the unaided ear can accomplish this—namely, the resolution of the clang of an instrument into its constituent tones—particularly if the mind be informed beforehand what the ear has to bend itself to find.

"And this brings to my mind an occurrence which took place in this room (at the Royal Institution) at the beginning of my acquaintance with Mr. Faraday. I wished to show him a peculiar action of an electro-magnet upon a crystal. I had everything arranged, when, just before I excited the magnet, he laid his hand upon my arm and asked 'What am I to look for?' Amid the assemblage of impressions connected with an experiment, even this prince of experimenters felt the advantage of having his attention directed to the special point in question."

The account of Faraday's discoveries here given is succinct—more so than many readers would have wished it. Some most interesting investigations—that, for instance, on the electricity of the gymnotus—have been left untouched in the present memoir. Those who know his charming History of a Candle would eagerly read his description of the electric eel. The former has had the honours of translation; and the translator, M. Henri Sainte-Claire Deville, justly says, "Michel Faraday" (he was then still living) "est la plus grande figure scientifique du temps présent."

Most interesting to the general reader are the researches into the liquefaction of gases. We are familiar with solids, as tallow and tin, which become liquid by the application of no great amount of heat; others, as ice, pass readily through the liquid into the vaporous or gaseous state; but the reverse operation—the reduction of an ordinary gas to a liquid first, and then to a solid—is anything but familiar to the mass of observers. Few dream that a gas can be rendered even liquid. Faraday accomplished the feat.

During his hours of liberty from other duties, he took up subjects of inquiry for himself. In the spring of 1823, thus self-prompted, he began the examination of a substance which had long been regarded as a chemical element—chlorine in a solid form—but which Sir Humphry Davy, in 1810, had proved to be a hydrate of chlorine; that is, a compound of chlorine and water. Faraday first analysed this hydrate, and wrote out an account of its composition. This account was looked over by Davy, who suggested the heating of the hydrate under pressure in a sealed glass tube. This was done. The hydrate fused at a blood-heat, the tube became filled with a yellow atmosphere, and was found to contain two liquid substances. Dr. Paris happened to enter the laboratory while Faraday was at work. Seeing the oily liquid in his tube, he rallied the young chemist for his carelessness in employing soiled vessels. On filing off the end of the tube its contents exploded, and the oily matter vanished. Early next morning, Dr. Paris received the following note:

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"Dear Sir,—The *oil* you noticed yesterday turns out to be liquid chlorine.

"Yours faithfully,

"M. FARADAY."

The gas had been liquefied by its own pressure. Faraday then tried compression with a syringe, and succeeded thus in liquefying the gas. Davy immediately applied the method of self-compressing atmospheres to the liquefaction of muriatic gas. Faraday continued the experiments, and succeeded in reducing a number of gases, till then deemed permanent, to the liquid condition. These important investigations established the fact that gases are but the vapours of liquids possessing a very low boiling-point, and gave a sure basis to the views at present entertained respecting molecular aggregation. Such results were not obtained without paying their price. While conducting his first experiments on the liquefaction of gases, thirteen pieces of glass were on one occasion driven by an explosion into Faraday's eye.

Equally wonderful and suggestive of consequences was his discovery of the magnetisation of light. The same may be said of his speculations touching the nature of matter, for which the reader is referred to the memoir itself. Enough has been written to show that it contains, in its hundred and seventy pages, besides a memorial to departed greatness, ample materials for thought, improvement, and study.

We will take leave of Faraday in the words of M. Deville: "The grandeur and the goodness of his character, the unalterable purity of his scientific life, the sincere love of what was right and just, which he always practised with the ardour and vivacity inherent in his nature—all these high qualities, and all these virtues which are pictured on his animated and sympathetic features, have exercised over his compatriots and the numerous strangers who visit him an attraction which no one to my knowledge could resist."

THE LATE MISS HOLLINGFORD.

CHAPTER I.

A DEAR old lady tells us this story in the late autumn evenings. Now the harvest is in, huge haycocks shelter the gable, the honey is strained and put by in jars, the apples are ripened and stored; the logs begin to sputter and sing in the big parlour at evening, hot cakes to steam on the tea-table, and the pleasant lamp-lit hours to spread themselves. Indoor things begin to have meaning looks of their own, our limbs grow quiet, and our brains begin to work. The moors beyond the window take strange expressions in the twilight, and fold mysteries into their hollows with the shadows of the night. The maids in the kitchen sing wild ballads to one another round the ingle; and when one of us young folks threads the rambling passages above to fetch a stray thimble from one of the lavender-scented bedrooms, she comes back flying down the great hollow staircase as if a troop of ghosts were at her heels. It is the time to enjoy a story, a true story, the story of a real life; and here it is as our dear old lady is telling it to us.

When I first learned, my children, that I was the ward of my mother's early friend, Mrs. Hollingford, and was to live under her roof after my departure from school, I little thought that a place like Hillsbro' Farm was ever likely to be my home. I was a conceited young person, and fond of giving myself airs. My father was colonel of his regiment, and I thought I had a right to look down on Lydia Brown, whose father was in business, though she wore velvet three inches deep upon her frocks, while mine had no better trimming than worsted braid. I had spent all my life at school, from the day when my father and mother kissed me for the last time in Miss Sweetman's parlour. I remember yet my pretty mother's pale tearful face as she looked back at me through the carriage window, and my own paroxysm of despairing tears on the mat when the door was shut. After that I had a pleasant enough life of it. I was a favourite at school, having a disposition to make myself and others as happy as I could. I required a good deal of snubbing, but when properly kept down I believe I was not a disagreeable girl.

My Indian letters generally contained some bit of news to amuse or interest my companions, and now and again captain, or ensign somebody, home upon sick leave, called and presented himself in Miss Sweetman's parlour, with curious presents for me, my mistresses, or favourite companions. I remember well the day when Major Guthrie arrived with the box of stuffed birds. Miss Kitty Sweetman, our youngest and best-loved mistress, was sent on before me to speak civilly to the gentleman in the parlour, and announce my coming. Miss Kitty was the drudge of the school, the sweetest-tempered drudge in the world. She was not so well informed as her elder sisters, and had to make up in the quantity of her teaching what it lacked in the quality. She was fagged, and hunted, and worried from morning till night by all the small girls in the school. She would have been merry if she had had time, and she was witty whenever she could get the chance of being anything but a machine; but she was not always happy, for I slept in her room, and I sometimes heard her crying in the night. As I remember her first she was young and pretty, but as time went on she grew a little faded, and a little harassed looking; though I still thought her sweet enough for anything.

Well, Miss Kitty went down to the major, and I, following close upon her heels, heard a little scream as I paused at the parlour door, and there when I went in was a bronzed-looking gentleman holding Miss Kitty's two hands in his, and looking in her face. And I could not care about the birds for thinking of it, and when we went up to bed Miss Kitty told me that Major Guthrie was an old friend of her

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family, and that he had said he would call again. And surely enough he did call again; and then it happened that the three Miss Sweetmans were invited out to an evening party—a great event for them. I thought there was something very particular about it, and so I took care to dress Miss Kitty with my own hands. She had a plain white dress, and I insisted on lending her my blue sash and coral necklace; and when she was dressed she put her finger in her mouth, and asked, between laughing and crying, whether I could further accommodate her with a coral and bells. She looked as young as anybody, though she would make fun of herself. And when she came in that night, and saw my open eyes waiting for her, she sat down on my bed and began to cry, and told me that Major Guthrie had asked her to marry him, and she was going to India as his wife. Then I heard the whole story; how he had loved her dearly long ago; how her friends had refused him because he was too poor, and she was too young; how after he had gone off in a passion reverses had come upon them, and she and her sisters had been obliged to open a school. And so Miss Kitty went out to India, and the only thing that comforted me for her loss was the fact that she took with her the embroidered handkerchief for my mother, and the wrought cigar-case for my father, which it had taken my idleness a whole year to produce. Ah, me! and my eyes never beheld either of these three again: friend, father, nor mother.

My first recollections of Mrs. Hollingford are associated with plum-cake, birthdays, and bonbons. I remember her—an erect, dignified-looking lady in a long velvet cloak, and with a peculiarly venerable face, half severe, half benevolent. I used to feel a little nervous about speaking to her, but I liked to sit at a distance and look at her. I had a superstition that she was the most powerful universal agent in existence; that she had only to say "Let there be plum-cake," and immediately it would appear on the table; or, "This little girl requires a new doll," and at once a waxen cherub would repose in my arms. The Miss Sweetmans paid her the greatest deference, and the girls used to peep over the blinds in the schoolroom at her handsome carriage and powdered servants. I remember, when a very little girl, presenting myself before Miss Sweetman one day, and popping up my hand as a sign that I wanted to ask a question. "What is the reason, Miss Sweetman," I asked, "that Mrs. Hollingford makes me think of the valiant woman of whom we were reading in the Bible yesterday?" But Miss Sweetman was busy, and only puckered up her mouth and ordered me back to my seat. Mrs. Hollingford used to take me on her knee and tell me of a little girl of hers who was at school in France, and with whom I was one day to be acquainted; and a tall lad, who was her son, used to call sometimes with bouquets for Miss Sweetman or sugar-plums for me; but I was never in her house, which I believed to be a palace, nor did I ever see Mr. Hollingford, who was a banker in the City. After my twelfth birthday I saw them no more. I missed the periodical appearance of the noble face in the parlour. Miss Sweetman, with a very long face, told me something of the breaking of a bank, ruin, and poverty. I was very sorry, but I was too young to realise it much; and I went on thinking of Mrs. Hollingford, in trouble, no doubt, and unfortunately removed from me, but still going about the world in her long velvet cloak and with her hands full of plum-cake.

So my youth went on till I was sixteen, pretty well grown for my years, a little pert, a little proud, a little fond of tinsels and butterflies, a little too apt to make fun of my neighbours, and to believe that the sun had got a special commission to shine upon me, but withal sympathetic and soft-hearted enough when in my right senses, and, as I said before, not a bad sort of girl when properly kept down by a judicious system of snubbing. I had already begun to count the months to the happy time, two years hence, when, my education being finished, I should at last rejoin my parents in India; and I was fond of describing all the beautiful things I would send as presents to the friends who had been kind to me in England. And then one fearful day came the black letter bearing the terrible news which bowed my head in the dust, scattered my girlish vanities, and altered all my fate for life. Every one in the house learned the news before me. I saw blank faces all around, and could only guess the cause, so careful were they to break it to me gradually. For two dreadful days they kept me on the rack of suspense, while I did not know whether it was my father or mother who was dead, or whether both were ill, or only one. But I learned all soon enough. There had been a fever, and both were dead. I was an orphan, quite alone in the world.

For three years after this I remained with the Miss Sweetmans, during which time I had regained much of my old cheerfulness, and also some degree of my natural pride and impertinence. My father and mother had been to me a memory and a hope; now they were a memory only. After my first grief and sense of desolation had passed, I went on with the routine of my days much as before. I did not miss my father and mother every hour as though I had lived under their roof and been familiar with their faces and caresses. But the bright expectation of my youth was extinguished, and I suffered secretly a great yearning for the love which I had now no right to claim from any one. The time was fast approaching when I must take my school-books down from Miss Sweetmans' shelves, pack up my trunks, and go forth among strangers. I had some property, more than enough for my needs, and I was to dwell under the roof of my guardian, Mrs. Hollingford. In the mean time, I paid several visits to the home of a wealthy schoolfellow, who had entered upon fashionable life, and who was eager to give me a taste of its delights before I

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yielded myself to the fate that was in store for me. I learned to dress with taste, to wear my hair in the newest style, and to waltz to perfection. But I could not go on paying visits for ever, and the time arrived when I found it necessary to turn my back on lively scenes and prepare for the obscurity of Hillsbro'. This was a remote place in the north country, from whence were dated all the letters addressed by Mrs. Hollingford to me since the time when she had become my guardian.

I did not go to Hillsbro' Farm in any unfair state of ignorance as to the present worldly position of its owners. Grace Tyrrell (my schoolfellow) was careful to let me know the depth of the degradation to which these friends of an old time had fallen from their once high estate: also to make me aware of the estimation in which they were held by the people of her world. The idea of my going to Hillsbro' was ridiculed till I got angry, but not ashamed.

"Those poor Hollingfords!" said one lady. "I am sure it is very kind of you, Miss Dacre, to pay them a visit; but *live* with them, my dear!—you could not think of identifying yourself with such people. Are you aware that the father ruined numbers of people, absconded with his pockets full of money, and never was heard of since?"

"Yes," said I; "but I have nothing to do with Mr. Hollingford. And I dare say if his wife had taken ill-gotten riches down to Hillsbro' with her, the police would have followed her before this; for she gives her address quite openly."

I afterwards heard this lady telling Grace that her friend was a very pert young woman. I did not mind, for, through fighting Mrs. Hollingford's battles, I had come to think that I loved her memory; and I tried to do so for my mother's sake.

"It is not at all necessary to live with a guardian," said Grace. "They say Mrs. Hollingford makes butter and sells it; and Frederick says the son is a mere ploughman. He is Mr. Hill's agent; Frederick met him by chance, quite lately, when he was shooting at Hillsbro'."

"Agent, is he?" said I, mischievously. "Then I should think he must at least know how to read and write. Come, that is not so bad!"

"You will get the worst of it, Grace," said Frederick Tyrrell, who was listening. "Lucky fellow, Hollingford, to have such a champion!"

So here I had better explain to you, my dears, that Captain Tyrrell was, even at this time, what old-fashioned people used to call a great *beau* of mine; that he was fond of dangling about my skirts and picking up my fan. Nothing more on this subject is necessary here. If you desire to know what he is like, I refer you to an old water-colour sketch of a weak-faced, washed-out looking young man, with handsome features, and a high-collared coat, which you will find in an old portfolio up-stairs, on the top shelf of the wardrobe, in the lumber-room. It was done by Grace's own hand, a portrait of her brother, and presented to me in those days. It has lain in that portfolio ever since.

Though I fought for the Hollingfords, and would hear no word against them, I do confess that I suffered much fear as to how I should manage to accommodate myself to the life which I might find awaiting me at Hillsbro' Farm. That idea of the butter-making, for instance, suggested a new train of reflections. The image of Mrs. Hollingford began to divest itself gradually of the long velvet cloak and majestic mien which it had always worn in my mind, and I speculated as to whether I might not be expected to dine in a kitchen with the farm-servants, and to assist with the milking of the cows. But I contrived to keep my doubts to myself, and went on packing my trunks with a grudging conviction that at least I was doing my duty.

And it is here, just when my packing was half done, that the strange, beautiful face of Rachel Leonard rises up to take its place in my history. I was introduced to her by chance; I did not know her story, nor that she had a story, nor yet that she was connected with any people whose intimate acquaintance I was likely to make in the future.

We met at a small musical party, where we had opportunities for conversation. She wore a white Indian muslin, with a bunch of scarlet flowers in the bosom. We were sitting in a softly lighted corner, and her figure was in relief against a crimson curtain. Her face was oval and olive, with an exquisite mingling of warmth and purity, depth and delicacy, in its tone. Her dark hair was swept up to the top of her head in a crown of braids, as it was then worn. Her eyes were dark grey, and very sweet, with a mysterious shadow of sadness about them when her face was in repose; yet, when they smiled they shone more than any eyes I have ever seen.

"Miss Dacre and Miss Leonard, I must make you acquainted," said our hostess (the meddling lady whom I have already quoted on the subject of the Hollingford misdemeanours). "You intend passing the winter at Hillsbro', Miss Leonard?"

"Yes," replied Rachel; "I believe we shall be at the hall about Christmas."

"Ah! and you have never been there before? I can assure you it is the most dreary place; you will be glad of a young friend in the neighbourhood. Miss Dacre's whim is one of our amusements at present. She is going to Hillsbro' to stay with a lady who is the mother of Mr. Hill's agent."

"Mrs. Cowan?" said Miss Leonard, with a ladylike assumption of interest in the subject.

"Not at all, my dear; the Cowans were worthy people, but Mr. Hill has changed his agent. Have you not heard? No, of course. Hollingford is the name of these people. The father was a banker, the bank smashed, and he ran away with large sums of money."

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I thought—nay, I was quite sure—that Miss Leonard started at the mention of the word Hollingford; and I also thought that she turned deathly pale; but she bent over her flowers at the moment, and the light was very subdued. No one else seemed to notice it, so it is just possible I may have been mistaken.

"Mr. Hill's new agent is, then, the son of Mr. Hollingford, the banker?" said Miss Leonard, after a pause. "I did not know that they belonged to that part of the country."

"Oh! I do not know about that; but the mother and son have taken a farm there lately, trying to make shift for themselves, poor things! They say young Hollingford has some Quixotic ideas about paying some of his father's liabilities; and if he has, I am sure it is very creditable to him. But I for one am inclined to doubt it. Bad conduct generally runs in families."

"Madam," said I, with my cheeks getting very hot, "Mrs. Hollingford was my mother's dear friend."

"Highty tighty, Miss Dacre," said the lady, "we never know how our friends are going to turn out. I say nothing but what is true. And allow me to warn you, my dear, that if you will persist in identifying yourself with such people you must make up your mind to hear them spoken of as they deserve."

"Madam," said I again, flashes of lightning now dancing before my eyes, "I am very sorry I ever entered your house; and I will certainly never enter it again."

Not waiting for more I made her a curtsey, and walked out of the room. I found the dressing-room where I had left my cloak, fully determined to go home at once, if I could only get the carriage. I had to wait some time, however, and whilst I sat alone the door opened and Rachel Leonard came hurriedly up to my side.

"I could not go away without bidding you good-night," she said, holding both my hands in both of hers. "Perhaps we may meet again. God bless you!"

Her voice was unsteady, her face pale, her eyes wet. A lady came to the door and said, "Now, Rachel, we are waiting!" She dropped my hand and was gone.

"Who is she?" I asked of Grace, as soon as we were together. "What relation is she to the Hills?"

"None whatever," said Grace; "only an adopted daughter. There is some romantic story about her, I believe. She went to Mrs. Hill as a companion first. The Hills, who are the most eccentric old couple in the world, took a violent fancy to her, and adopted her for their own. I believe she is an orphan of a very good family. They keep up a wonderful fuss about her; and people say they have made her their heiress."

"I wonder why she looked so strangely at the mention of the Hollingfords," I said, musingly.

"My dear Margery," said Grace, shaking her head, "I give you up. You are perfectly insane on the subject of the Hollingfords. What will you imagine next?"

"I do not think I imagined it," said I. "I am sure that she turned as white as your cloak."

"Well, well," said Grace, "there may be some deep mystery for all I know. Miss Leonard may, like yourself, have a taste for agriculture; or may have known young Mr. Hollingford before he turned ploughman. I advise you to think about it. You have materials for a pretty romance to take into exile with you."

And I did think about it long afterwards.

CHAPTER II.

My children, you must remember that I am speaking of an old-fashioned time, and I travelled down to Hillsbro' by coach. The promenade of a fashionable watering-place had hitherto been my idea of the country. Imagine, then, how my hungry eyes devoured the new beauties presented to them. I had provided myself with a book, and I had hoped to fall asleep over it, yet here I was with my eyes riveted to a pane of glass, afraid to wink lest I should miss something. Grace's warning, "You will fret yourself to death, you will be back before a month," grew faint in my ears. When night shut out my new world and I fell asleep I dreamed of extraordinary phenomena; trees stalking about the plains, fairies leaping out of the foam of the rivers.

I opened my eyes to a rose-coloured dawn. We had stopped before a little village inn. A row of pigeons with burnished necks looked down on me from their perch on the signboard above the door; a half-dressed curly-headed child peeped out of a window from under the eaves, and clapped his hands at the steaming horses: and a young man walked out of the inn with a whip in his hand, and asked if there might be a lady inside the coach whose destination was Hillsbro' Farm.

I was soon seated by his side in a gig. By a few careful glances I had easily assured myself that there was nothing of the ploughman in the appearance of Mrs. Hollingford's son. You will want to know what I thought of him that morning, and I will tell you. He seemed to me the beau ideal of a country gentleman: nothing less than this, and something more. You have known him, my dears, stooped and white-haired, and have loved him in his age for the sake of the heart that never grew old. But on that brilliant autumn morning when he and I first sat side by side, the same loveable spirit was clothed with the strength and beauty of mortal youth.

The vivid life of the country was sweet to me that early morning. Carts of hay lumbered past us, almost crushing us into the hedges as they swept along heavily, leaving a trail of fragrance in the air. Red and brown leaves lay thick on the ground, making beautiful the un-

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dulations of the roads. Mists of dew hung among the purple folds of the hills, and the sun dashed the woods and streams with kindling gold. By-and-by the whole country side was laughing in the full face of the day.

Hillsbro' Farmhouse was, and is, a low long dwelling built of dark bricks, and standing among orchards and meadows, green pasture lands and running streams. Its ivyed chimneys had for background the sombre lines of a swelling moor, belted by a wood of pines which skirted the hollow wherein the earth nourished the fatness and sweetness of the thrifty farm acres. Along the edge of the moor the road ran that led to Hillsbro' Hall, and a short cut through the wood brought one down upon a back entrance to the squire's own grounds.

The dear old farm! Roses were blowing in that morning at the open sashes of the big, heavy, roughly hung windows. Two young girls, who were afterwards dear to me as fibres of my heart, lingered beside the open door; stately handsome Jane, with her solemn observant black eyes and trim dark dress, and frolicsome Mopsie with her laughing face, and her hat tied down, gipsy fashion, with a red ribbon. They lingered to see me, to take their share in giving me a welcome, and then set out on their long walk, discussing me by the way. They told me of it afterwards. Jane said I was only fit for a glass case, and Mopsie declared I alighted from the old gig as if I had a mind to dance. They were awed by the high red heels on my boots, the feather in my hat, and the quilted satin of my pelisse. They wondered I could deign to speak anything but French, and concluded I did so only out of compliment to their homeliness.

And I meanwhile, decked in all the fanciful elegancies of a London toilette, sat down to breakfast in the long parlour at Hillsbro' Farm, with something in my heart that would not let me eat though I was hungry, and something in my eyes that would not let me see very well though the sun came rich and yellow through each of the wide windows, forming one broad golden path down the middle of the room. I saw but dimly the dark brown walls and ceiling, the stiff-backed chairs with their red covers, the jar full of late roses that stood in either window, the heap of trailing ivy that overran the huge grate. It was Mrs. Hollingford's face that did it as she sat, kind, careful, hospitable, pressing on me sweet home-made cakes, fresh butter, fragrant tea, delicious cream, and delicate pink eggs. Ah me! it was her face that did it. There was my great lady, my beneficent friend, my valiant woman. Her eyes were a little sunken, the fire of their energy a little slackened, her brow a little seamed; the strain of fortitude had drawn a tight cord about her mouth. Whence, then, that new touching beauty that made one see the stamp of heaven's nobility shining on her face? Had I quite forgotten her, or was she indeed something new? It was as if grief had chiselled her features afresh out of the superfluous roundings of prosperity, wasted them into perfect sweetness, hacked them into purer refinement. She wore a straight black gown of the coarsest material, only the fair folds of muslin about her throat giving daintiness to her attire. Her son breakfasted with us, and I fancied he often looked at me curiously as if to say, "What concern can she have with us? why did she come? how long will she remain?" I had talked to him without embarrassment as we drove along, but now I could hardly speak. Never had I felt so shy in any company as I did now in the presence of my mother's friend.

After breakfast she led me to my room, bright and airy, but scantily furnished. It had a window looking out on an orchard threaded by long alleys, over which hung a glowing roof of fruit-laden branches. And here I unpacked my trunks and stowed away my elegant dresses in a huge painted wardrobe smelling of apples. I laid aside with a kind of shame all the little ornaments I was accustomed to wear, and dressed myself in the plainest gown I possessed. Descending the quaint old staircase again, I found Mrs. Hollingford walking up and down the hall waiting patiently for my appearance.

"What a great woman you have grown, my love!" she said, drawing my hand within her arm, and leading me through the open hall door. "But you have still your mother's fair hair and sunny eyes. Will you walk with me for an hour? I have much to say to you, and the sooner it is said the better."

Then she told me the story of her life, and misfortunes, sternly, sweetly, with strange humility and fortitude. I knew much of it before, but she would tell it all.

"And now, my love," she said, "you know us as we are. Your mother, when she made me your guardian, did not foresee the changes that were to take place. You have other friends who are willing to give you a home. You have come here of your own will. When you wish to leave us we will not wonder."

I threw my arms round her neck and told her I would not leave her. Never, since Miss Kitty Sweetman went to India, had my heart gone forth so completely to any one.

She bade me not be too hasty. "You will find our life so different from anything you have ever known," she said. We all fear it for you. We are so busy here. We have always a purpose before our eyes to make us work."

"Then I will work too," I said. "I will not be the only drone in such a thrifty hive."

She smiled at this, and shook her head. But I immediately began to cast about for the means by which I might find it possible to keep my word.

CHAPTER III.

I SOON learned to love the farm. I began to know the meaning of the word "home." The beauty and loveableness of some persons and places takes you by surprise; with others they steal upon you by degrees; but there was that about Hillsbro' Farm which I loved much at

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once and more afterwards. Looking at it in the most common-place way, it had all the peace and plenty of an English farmhouse, while for eyes that sought more they would find enough that was picturesque in the orchard's ruddy thickets, where the sun struck fire on frosty mornings; in the wide pasture lands sloping to the sedgy river, where the cows cooled their feet on sultry evenings. You know as well as I the curious bowery garden beyond the lower window of the parlour, stocked with riches and sweets of all kinds, rows of beehives standing in the sun, roses and raspberries growing side by side. The breath of thyme and balm, lavender and myrtle, was always in that parlour. You know the sheepfold and the paddock, the old tree over the west gable where the owl made his nest—the owl that used to come and sit on our schoolroom window-sill and hoot at night. You know the sun-dial where the screaming peacock used to perch and spread his tail; the dovecote, where the silver-necks and fan-tails used to coo and ruffle their feathers. You know too, all the quaint plannings and accidents of the old house; how the fiery creeper ran riot through the ivy on the dark walls, dangling its burning wreaths over the windows; how the hall door lay open all day with the dogs sleeping on the broad door-step. Also within that there were long dark passages, rooms with low ceilings; a step up here, and a step down there; fireplaces twisted into odd corners, narrow pointed windows, and wide latticed ones. You know all the household recesses, the dairies and pantries and storerooms; but you cannot know how Mrs. Hollingford toiled amongst them, filling them with her industry one day that they might be emptied the next; hardening her delicate hands with labour to the end that justice might be done, that some who had lost might gain, that a portion of her husband's heavy debts might be paid, and a portion of the curse of the impoverished lifted from his guilty shoulders.

No luxury was ever permitted in that household. Old gowns were worn and mended till they could be worn and mended no longer. The girls were of an age to go abroad to school, but they must be contented with such education as they could pick up at home, so long as one poor creature suffered straits through their father's fault. The only indulgence allowed was almsgiving. Mopsie might divide her dinner with a hungry child, or Jane bestow her new petticoat on an aged woman; but they must, in consequence, deny themselves and suffer inconvenience till such time as it came to be again their turn to have their absolute wants relieved.

I did, indeed, feel like a drone in a hive when, on leaving my room in the mornings, I met Mrs. Hollingford coming from her work in the dairy, John Hollingford arriving from his early visit to a distant part of the farm, Jane from her sewing closet where she made and mended the linen of the household, and Mopsie from the kitchen with a piled dish of breakfast-cakes, showing what her morning task had been. I could not eat for envy. Why could I not be of use to somebody? I gave Mopsie some gay ribbons, which were returned to me by her mother. Nothing might she wear but her plain black frock and white frill. I gave Jane a book of poems with woodcuts, and that was accepted with rapture. This encouraged me. I picked up two little children on the road, and to one I gave a bright silk girdle for a skipping-rope, and to the other a doll dressed from the materials of a fine gauze hat, which I picked to pieces for the purpose. I was not going to be a peony flaunting among thrifty modest vetches. At first I was sorry for the destruction of my pretty things, but soon I grew to admire the demureness of my grey gown and little black apron. I learned to make pies and cakes, to sweep a room and set it to rights, to wash and get up linen and laces, to churn, to make butter. But, as many hands were engaged in these matters, I was often thrown out of employment. I made music for my friends in the evenings, and, as they liked it, this was something; but it was not enough. A new spirit had entered into me. I felt my old self lost in the admiration which I had conceived for the new friends who had accepted me amongst them.

By-and-by I found out a little niche of usefulness for myself. Jane and Mopsie attended the village school. One day I went to the town to buy some trifle and call for the girls. It was past the hour for breaking up, and I found Mopsie romping with some rude-looking girls on the green, while Jane, detained for some fault, sat alone in the schoolroom, perched on a bench, her arms folded and her eyes gloomily fixed on the wall. When I entered she blushed crimson. She was a proud girl, and I knew she was hurt at my seeing her disgrace. I coaxed her to speak out her trouble.

"I could teach the whole school," she said, fiercely—"master, mistress, and all—and yet I am kept sitting over a, b, c, like a baby. I get so sick of it that sometimes I answer wrong by way of novelty. Then I have to hold out my hand for the rod. To-day I drew Portia and Shylock on my slate, and forgot to finish my sum; therefore I am disgraced!"

I seized the happy moment and offered myself to the girls as a governess. Mopsie stopped on the road and hugged me in delight. Jane squeezed my hand and was silent during the rest of the walk, except when she said,

"Mother will never consent. I am too proud, and she wants me to be humbled. She thinks it is good for me to go to the village school."

That night, however, I laid my plan before Mrs. Hollingford, and, after some trouble, I attained my point.

We chose for our schoolroom an unoccupied chamber at the end of a long passage up-stairs. It was furnished with a deal table and chairs,

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and a small square of green carpet laid upon the sanded floor. It had three latticed windows looking westward, and one of those odd grates I have mentioned, large enough to cook a dinner. We kept it filled with logs, and in the evenings, after we had drawn the curtains in the parlour, set the tea-table, and made Mrs. Hollingford comfortable on the sofa for an hour's rest, we three retreated to our schoolroom for a chat in the firelight. Here John joined us when he happened to come home early, and many a happy hour we passed, four of us sitting round the blazing logs, talking and roasting apples. We told stories, tales of the outer world, and legends of the country around us. We described places and people we had seen, and our fancies about others we had not seen. John, who had travelled, was the most frequent speaker; and as I was a wonder of experience to his sisters, just so was he a wonder to me. We laughed, cried, or listened in breathless silence, all as he willed, while the purple and yellow lingered in the sky behind the lattice, and the moaning of the wind through the forlorn fields, the hissing of the roasting apples, and the crackling of the burning wood, kept up an accompaniment to his voice.

There were other evenings, too, when John was late, and Mopsie having grown tired of serious talk, tripped off to hear the lasses singing Bold Robin Hood in the kitchen. Then Jane used to open her heart to me, and talk about the troubles of the family. Her heart was stern and bitter against her father. Well had she said she was proud; well had her mother wished to humble her, if that could be done. She had, I believe, a great intellect, and she had much personal beauty of a grand character. I do not think she thought much about the latter, but she felt her mental powers. She knew she was fitted to move in a high sphere, and chafed against her fate; still more against the fate of her brother.

I think I see her, on her low seat before the fire, her hands clasping one knee, her dark head thrown back, and her eyes fixed on the dancing shadows above the chimney.

"To think of John settling down as a farmer!" she said; "John, who for cleverness might be prime minister. And there is no hope of his getting away from it; none whatever."

I could not but agree to this, though the thought occurred to me that the farm might not be so pleasant a home if John had to go away and be prime minister. All I could say I said to combat her rebellious despondency as to her own future.

"If you knew the emptiness and foolishness of the gay world," I said, in a sage manner, "you would be thankful for our quiet life at Hillsbro'."

"It is not the gay world I think of," she said. "It is the world of thought, of genius."

"Well, Jane," said I, cheerfully, "you may pierce your way to that yet."

"No!" she said. "If I had a clean name I would try to do it. As it is, I will not hold up my head only to be pointed at. But I will not spend my life at Hillsbro', moping. I will go away and work, teach, or write, if I can."

I saw her eyes beginning to flash, and I did not like these fierce moods for Jane. I was turning over a book at the time, and, to divert her attention, I read aloud the name written on the title-page.

"Mary Hollingford," I said. "Was not she your elder sister?"

Jane started. "Yes," she said. "Who mentioned her to you?"

"Your mother," I said, "used to tell me of her little Mary, who was at school in France. I cannot recollect who told me of her death. Do you remember her?"

"Oh yes," said Jane, "perfectly. We did not lose her till after—my father went away."

"I suppose she took the trouble to heart," I said, reflectively; and then was sorry I had said it. But Jane answered,

"Yes," readily; then dropped her face between her hands, and remained plunged in one of her motionless fits of abstraction for half an hour.

I never alluded to this subject again to Jane, but one evening, when Mopsie and I were alone together, the child spoke of it herself.

"Margery," she said, "you are holding me now just as sister Mary used to hold me with both her arms round my waist, when I was a tiny little thing, and she used to play with me in our nursery in London."

"You remember her, then?" I said.

"Yes," said Mopsie. "I remember her like a dream. She used to come home for the holidays, and a handsome French lady with her, who used to throw up her hands if we had not ribbons in our sleeves and smart rosettes on our shoes. I remember sister Mary in a pretty white frock trimmed with lace, and her hair curled down to her waist. I used to think her like one of the angels. But we never speak of her now, nor of papa, because it pains mother and John. I used to speak of her to Jane sometimes in the night, just to ask her did she think sister Mary was thinking of us in heaven; but Jane used to get into such dreadful fits of crying that I grew afraid. I wish some one would talk of her. I think it is cruel of us all to forget her because she is dead."

And tears stood in Mopsie's blue eyes. But the next half hour she was singing like a skylark over some household task.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

CHAPTER II.

MR. GODFREY followed the announcement of his name—as Mr. Godfrey does everything else—exactly at the right time. He was not so close on the servant's heels as to startle us. He was not so far behind as to cause us the double inconvenience of a pause and an open door. It is in the completeness of his daily life that the true Christian appears. This dear man was very complete.

"Go to Miss Verinder," said my aunt, addressing the servant, "and tell her Mr. Ablewhite is here."

We both inquired after his health. We both asked him together whether he felt like himself again, after his terrible adventure of the past week. With perfect tact, he contrived to answer us at the same moment. Lady Verinder had his reply in words. I had his charming smile.

"What," he cried, with infinite tenderness, "have I done to deserve all this sympathy? My dear aunt! my dear Miss Clack! I have merely been mistaken for somebody else. I have only been blindfolded; I have only been strangled; I have only been thrown flat on my back, on a very thin carpet, covering a particularly hard floor. Just think how much worse it might have been! I might have been murdered; I might have been robbed. What have I lost? Nothing but Nervous Force—which the law doesn't recognise as property; so that, strictly speaking, I have lost nothing at all. If I could have had my own way, I would have kept my adventure to myself—I shrink from all this fuss and publicity. But Mr. Luker made *his* injuries public, and *my* injuries, as the necessary consequence, have been proclaimed in their turn. I have become the property of the newspapers, until the gentle reader gets sick of the subject. I am very sick indeed of it myself. May the gentle reader soon be like me! And how is dear Rachel? Still enjoying the gaieties of London? So glad to hear it! Miss Clack, I need all your indulgence. I am sadly behindhand with my Committee Work and my dear Ladies. But I really do hope to look in at the Mothers'-Small-Clothes next week. Did you make cheering progress at Monday's Committee? Was the Board hopeful about future prospects? And are we nicely off for trousers?"

The heavenly gentleness of his smile made his apologies irresistible. The richness of his deep voice added its own indescribable charm to the interesting business question which he had just addressed to me. In truth, we were almost *too* nicely off for trousers; we were quite overwhelmed by them. I was just about to say so, when the door opened again, and an element of worldly disturbance entered the room, in the person of Miss Verinder.

She approached dear Mr. Godfrey at a most unladylike rate of speed, with her hair shockingly untidy, and her face, what *I* should call, unbecomingly flushed.

"I am charmed to see you, Godfrey," she said, addressing him, I grieve to add, in the offhand manner of one young man talking to another. "I wish you had brought Mr. Luker with you. You and he (as long as our present excitement lasts) are the two most interesting men in all London. It's morbid to say this; it's unhealthy; it's all that a well-regulated mind like Miss Clack's most instinctively shudders at. Never mind that. Tell me the whole of the Northumberland-street story directly. I know the newspapers have left some of it out."

Even dear Mr. Godfrey partakes of the fallen nature which we all inherit from Adam—it is a very small share of our human legacy, but, alas! he has it. I confess it grieved me to see him take Rachel's hand in both of his own hands, and lay it softly on the left side of his waistcoat. It was a direct encouragement to her reckless way of talking, and her insolent reference to me.

"Dearest Rachel," he said, in the same voice which had thrilled me when he spoke of our prospects and our trousers, "the newspapers have told you everything—and they have told it much better than I can."

"Godfrey thinks we all make too much of the matter," my aunt remarked. "He has just been saying that he doesn't care to speak of it."

"Why?"

She put the question with a sudden flash in her eyes, and a sudden look up into Mr. God-

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frey's face. On his side, he looked down at her with an indulgence so injudicious and so ill-deserved, that I really felt called on to interfere.

"Rachel, darling!" I remonstrated, gently, "true greatness and true courage are ever modest."

"You are a very good fellow in your way, Godfrey," she said—not taking the smallest notice, observe, of me, and still speaking to her cousin as if she was one young man addressing another. "But I am quite sure you are not great; I don't believe you possess any extraordinary courage; and I am firmly persuaded—if you ever had any modesty—that your lady-worshippers relieved you of that virtue a good many years since. You have some private reason for not talking of your adventure in Northumberland-street; and I mean to know it."

"My reason is the simplest imaginable, and the most easily acknowledged," he answered, still bearing with her. "I am tired of the subject."

"You are tired of the subject? My dear Godfrey, I am going to make a remark."

"What is it?"

"You live a great deal too much in the society of women. And you have contracted two very bad habits in consequence. You have learnt to talk nonsense seriously, and you have got into a way of telling fibs for the pleasure of telling them. You can't go straight with your lady-worshippers. I mean to make you go straight with *me*. Come, and sit down. I am brimful of downright questions; and I expect you to be brimful of downright answers."

She actually dragged him across the room to a chair by the window, where the light would fall on his face. I deeply feel being obliged to report such language, and to describe such conduct. But, hemmed in as I am, between Mr. Franklin Blake's cheque on one side and my own sacred regard for truth on the other, what am I to do? I looked at my aunt. She sat unmoved; apparently in no way disposed to interfere. I had never noticed this kind of torpor in her before. It was, perhaps, the reaction after the trying time she had had in the country. Not a pleasant symptom to remark, be it what it might, at dear Lady Verinder's age, and with dear Lady Verinder's autumnal exuberance of figure.

In the mean time, Rachel had settled herself at the window with our amiable and forbearing—our too forbearing—Mr. Godfrey. She began the string of questions with which she had threatened him, taking no more notice of her mother, or of myself, than if we had not been in the room.

"Have the police done anything, Godfrey?"

"Nothing whatever."

"It is certain, I suppose, that the three men who laid the trap for you were the same three men who afterwards laid the trap for Mr. Luker?"

"Humanly speaking, my dear Rachel, there can be no doubt of it."

"And not a trace of them has been discovered?"

"Not a trace."

"It is thought—is it not?—that these three men are the three Indians who came to our house in the country."

"Some people think so."

"Do you think so?"

"My dear Rachel, they blindfolded me before I could see their faces. I know nothing whatever of the matter. How can I offer any opinion on it?"

Even the angelic gentleness of Mr. Godfrey was, you see, beginning to give way at last under the persecution inflicted on him. Whether unbridled curiosity, or ungovernable dread, dictated Miss Verinder's questions I do not presume to inquire. I only report that, on Mr. Godfrey's attempting to rise, after giving her the answer just described, she actually took him by the two shoulders, and pushed him back into his chair.—Oh, don't say this was immodest! Don't even hint that the recklessness of guilty terror could alone account for such conduct as I have described! We must not judge others. My Christian friends, indeed, indeed, indeed, we must not judge others!

She went on with her questions, unabashed. Earnest Biblical students will perhaps be reminded—as I was reminded—of the blinded children of the devil, who went on with their orgies, unabashed, in the time before the Flood.

"I want to know something about Mr. Luker, Godfrey."

"I am again unfortunate, Rachel. No man knows less of Mr. Luker than I do."

"You never saw him before you and he met accidentally at the bank?"

"Never."

"You have seen him since?"

"Yes. We have been examined together, as well as separately, to assist the police."

"Mr. Luker was robbed of a receipt which he had got from his banker's—was he not? What was the receipt for?"

"For a valuable gem which he had placed in the safe keeping of the bank."

"That's what the newspapers say. It may be enough for the general reader; but it is not enough for me. The banker's receipt must have mentioned what the gem was?"

"The banker's receipt, Rachel—as I have heard it described—mentioned nothing of the kind. A valuable gem, belonging to Mr. Luker; deposited by Mr. Luker; sealed with Mr. Luker's seal; and only to be given up on Mr. Luker's personal application. That was the form, and that is all I know about it."

She waited a moment, after he had said that. She looked at her mother, and sighed. She looked back again at Mr. Godfrey, and went on.

"Some of our private affairs, at home," she said, "seem to have got into the newspapers?"

"I grieve to say, it is so."

"And some idle people, perfect strangers to us, are trying to trace a connexion between

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what happened at our house in Yorkshire and what has happened since, here in London?"

"The public curiosity, in certain quarters, is, I fear, taking that turn."

"The people who say that the three unknown men who ill used you and Mr. Luker are the three Indians, also say that the valuable gem——?"

There she stopped. She had become gradually, within the last few moments, whiter and whiter in the face. The extraordinary blackness of her hair made this paleness, by contrast, so ghastly to look at, that we all thought she would faint, at the moment when she checked herself in the middle of her question. Dear Mr. Godfrey made a second attempt to leave his chair. My aunt entreated her to say no more. I followed my aunt with a modest medicinal peace-offering, in the shape of a bottle of salts. We none of us produced the slightest effect on her, "Godfrey, stay where you are. Mamma, there is not the least reason to be alarmed about me. Clack, you're dying to hear the end of it—I won't faint, expressly to oblige *you*."

Those were the exact words she used—taken down in my diary the moment I got home. But, oh, don't let us judge! My Christian friends, don't let us judge!

She turned once more to Mr. Godfrey. With an obstinacy dreadful to see, she went back again to the place where she had checked herself, and completed her question in these words:

"I spoke to you, a minute since, about what people were saying in certain quarters. Tell me plainly, Godfrey, do they any of them say that Mr. Luker's valuable gem is—The Moonstone?"

As the name of the Indian Diamond passed her lips, I saw a change come over my admirable friend. His complexion deepened. He lost the genial suavity of manner which is one of his greatest charms. A noble indignation inspired his reply.

"They *do* say it," he answered. "There are people who don't hesitate to accuse Mr. Luker of telling a falsehood to serve some private interests of his own. He has over and over again solemnly declared that, until this scandal assailed him, he had never even heard of The Moonstone. And these vile people reply, without a shadow of proof to justify them, He has his reasons for concealment; we decline to believe him on his oath. Shameful! shameful!"

Rachel looked at him very strangely—I can't well describe how—while he was speaking. When he had done, she said,

"Considering that Mr. Luker is only a chance acquaintance of yours, you take up his cause, Godfrey, rather warmly."

My gifted friend made her one of the most truly evangelical answers I ever heard in my life.

"I hope, Rachel, I take up the cause of all oppressed people rather warmly," he said.

The tone in which those words were spoken might have melted a stone. But, oh dear, what is the hardness of stone? Nothing, compared to the hardness of the unregenerate human heart! She sneered. I blush to record it—she sneered at him to his face.

"Keep your beautiful language for your Ladies' Committees, Godfrey. I am certain that the scandal which has assailed Mr. Luker, has not spared You."

Even my aunt's torpor was roused by those words.

"My dear Rachel," she remonstrated, "you have really no right to say that!"

"I mean no harm, mamma—I mean good. Have a moment's patience with me, and you will see."

She looked back at Mr. Godfrey, with what appeared to be a sudden pity for him. She went the length—the very unladylike length—of taking him by the hand.

"I am certain," she said, "that I have found out the true reason of your unwillingness to speak of this matter before my mother and before me An unlucky accident has associated you in people's minds with Mr. Luker. You have told me what scandal says of *him*. What does scandal say of *you*?"

Even at the eleventh hour, dear Mr. Godfrey—always ready to return good for evil—tried to spare her.

"Don't ask me!" he said, "It's better forgotten, Rachel—it is, indeed."

"I *will* hear it!" she cried out, fiercely, at the top of her voice.

"Tell her, Godfrey!" entreated my aunt. "Nothing can do her such harm as your silence is doing now!"

Mr. Godfrey's fine eyes filled with tears. He cast one last appealing look at her—and then he spoke the fatal words:

"If you will have it, Rachel—scandal says that the Moonstone is in pledge to Mr. Luker, and that I am the man who has pawned it."

She started to her feet with a scream. She looked backwards and forwards from Mr. Godfrey to my aunt, and from my aunt to Mr. Godfrey, in such a frantic manner that I really thought she had gone mad.

"Don't speak to me! Don't touch me!" she exclaimed, shrinking back from all of us (I declare like some hunted animal!) into a corner of the room. "This is my fault! I must set it right. I have sacrificed myself—I had a right to do that, if I liked. But to let an innocent man be ruined; to keep a secret which destroys his character for life—Oh, good God, it's too horrible! I can't bear it!"

My aunt half rose from her chair, then suddenly sat down again. She called to me faintly, and pointed to a little phial in her work-box.

"Quick!" she whispered. "Six drops, in water. Don't let Rachel see."

Under other circumstances, I should have thought this strange. There was no time now to think—there was only time to give the medicine. Dear Mr. Godfrey unconsciously assisted me in concealing what I was about

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from Rachel, by speaking composing words to her at the other end of the room.

"Indeed, indeed, you exaggerate," I heard him say. "My reputation stands too high to be destroyed by a miserable passing scandal like this. It will be all forgotten in another week. Let us never speak of it again."

She was perfectly inaccessible, even to such generosity as this. She went on from bad to worse.

"I must, and will, stop it," she said. "Mamma! hear what I say. Miss Clack! hear what I say. I know the hand that took the Moonstone. I know—" she laid a strong emphasis on the words; she stamped her foot in the rage that possessed her—"*I know that Godfrey Ablewhite is innocent!* Take me to the magistrate, Godfrey! Take me to the magistrate, and I will swear it!"

My aunt caught me by the hand, and whispered, "Stand between us for a minute or two. Don't let Rachel see me." I noticed a bluish tinge in her face which alarmed me. She saw I was startled. "The drops will put me right in a minute or two," she said, and so closed her eyes, and waited a little.

While this was going on, I heard dear Mr. Godfrey still gently remonstrating.

"You must not appear publicly in such a thing as this," he said. "*Your* reputation, dearest Rachel, is something too pure and too sacred to be trifled with."

"*My* reputation!" She burst out laughing. "Why, I am accused, Godfrey, as well as you. The best detective officer in England declares that I have stolen my own Diamond. Ask him what he thinks—and he will tell you that I have pledged the Moonstone to pay my private debts!" She stopped—ran across the room—and fell on her knees at her mother's feet. "Oh, mamma! mamma! mamma! I must be mad—mustn't I?—not to own the truth *now!*" She was too vehement to notice her mother's condition—she was on her feet again, and back with Mr. Godfrey, in an instant. "I won't let you—I won't let any innocent man—be accused and disgraced through my fault. If you won't take me before the magistrate, draw out a declaration of your innocence on paper, and I will sign it. Do as I tell you, Godfrey, or I'll write it to the newspapers—I'll go out, and cry it in the streets!"

We will not say this was the language of remorse—we will say it was the language of hysterics. Indulgent Mr. Godfrey pacified her by taking a sheet of paper, and drawing out the declaration. She signed it in a feverish hurry. "Show it everywhere—don't think of *me*," she said, as she gave it to him. "I am afraid, Godfrey, I have not done you justice, hitherto, in my thoughts. You are more unselfish—you are a better man than I believed you to be. Come here when you can, and I will try and repair the wrong I have done you."

She gave him her hand. Alas, for our fallen nature! Alas, for Mr. Godfrey! He not only forgot himself so far as to kiss her hand—he adopted a gentleness of tone in answering her which, in such a case, was little better than a compromise with sin. "I will come, dearest," he said, "on condition that we don't speak of this hateful subject again." Never had I seen and heard our Christian Hero to less advantage than on this occasion.

Before another word could be said by anybody, a thundering knock at the street door startled us all. I looked through the window, and saw the World, the Flesh, and the Devil waiting before the house—as typified in a carriage and horses, a powdered footman, and three of the most audaciously dressed women I ever beheld in my life.

Rachel started, and composed herself. She crossed the room to her mother.

"They have come to take me to the flower-show," she said. "One word, mamma, before I go. I have not distressed you, have I?"

(Is the bluntness of moral feeling which could ask such a question as that, after what had just happened, to be pitied or condemned? I like to lean towards mercy. Let us pity it.)

The drops had produced their effect. My poor aunt's complexion was like itself again. "No, no, my dear," she said. "Go with our friends, and enjoy yourself."

Her daughter stooped, and kissed her. I had left the window, and was near the door, when Rachel approached it to go out. Another change had come over her—she was in tears. I looked with interest at the momentary softening of that obdurate heart. I felt inclined to say a few earnest words. Alas! my well-meant sympathy only gave offence. "What do you mean by pitying me?" she asked, in a bitter whisper, as she passed to the door. "Don't you see how happy I am? I'm going to the flower-show, Clack; and I've got the prettiest bonnet in London." She completed the hollow mockery of that address by blowing me a kiss—and so left the room.

I wish I could describe in words the compassion that I felt for this miserable and misguided girl. But I am almost as poorly provided with words as with money. Permit me to say—my heart bled for her.

Returning to my aunt's chair, I observed dear Mr. Godfrey searching for something softly, here and there, in different parts of the room. Before I could offer to assist him, he had found what he wanted. He came back to my aunt and me, with his declaration of innocence in one hand, and with a box of matches in the other.

"Dear aunt, a little conspiracy!" he said. "Dear Miss Clack, a pious fraud which even your high moral rectitude will excuse! Will you leave Rachel to suppose that I accept the generous self-sacrifice which has signed this paper? And will you kindly bear witness that I destroy it in your presence, before I leave the house?" He kindled a match, and, lighting the paper, laid it to burn in a plate on the table. "Any trifling inconvenience that I may

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suffer is as nothing," he remarked, "compared with the importance of preserving that pure name from the contaminating contact of the world. There! We have reduced it to a little harmless heap of ashes; and our dear impulsive Rachel will never know what we have done! How do you feel?—my precious friends, how do you feel? For my poor part, I am as light-hearted as a boy!"

He beamed on us with his beautiful smile; he held out a hand to my aunt, and a hand to me. I was too deeply affected by his noble conduct to speak. I closed my eyes; I put his hand, in a kind of spiritual self-forgetfulness, to my lips. He murmured a soft remonstrance. Oh, the ecstasy, the pure, unearthly ecstasy of that moment! I sat—I hardly know on what—quite lost in my own exalted feelings. When I opened my eyes again, it was like descending from heaven to earth. There was nobody but my aunt in the room. He had gone.

I should like to stop here—I should like to close my narrative with the record of Mr. Godfrey's noble conduct. Unhappily, there is more, much more, which the unrelenting pecuniary pressure of Mr. Blake's cheque obliges me to tell. The painful disclosures which were to reveal themselves in my presence, during that Tuesday's visit to Montagu Square, were not at an end yet.

Finding myself alone with Lady Verinder, I turned naturally to the subject of her health; touching delicately on the strange anxiety which she had shown to conceal her indisposition, and the remedy applied to it, from the observation of her daughter.

My aunt's reply greatly surprised me.

"Drusilla," she said (if I have not already mentioned that my christian name is Drusilla, permit me to mention it now), "you are touching—quite innocently, I know—on a very distressing subject."

I rose immediately. Delicacy left me but one alternative—the alternative, after first making my apologies, of taking my leave. Lady Verinder stopped me, and insisted on my sitting down again.

"You have surprised a secret," she said, "which I had confided to my sister, Mrs. Ablewhite, and to my lawyer, Mr. Bruff, and to no one else. I can trust in their discretion; and I am sure, when I tell you the circumstances, I can trust in yours. Have you any pressing engagement, Drusilla? or is your time your own this afternoon?"

It is needless to say that my time was entirely at my aunt's disposal.

"Keep me company then," she said, "for another hour. I have something to tell you which I believe you will be sorry to hear. And I shall have a service to ask of you afterwards, if you don't object to assist me."

It is again needless to say that, so far from objecting, I was all eagerness to assist her.

"You can wait here," she went on, "till Mr. Bruff comes at five. And you can be one of the witnesses, Drusilla, when I sign my Will."

Her Will! I thought of the drops which I had seen in her work-box. I thought of the bluish tinge which I had noticed in her complexion. A light which was not of this world—a light shining prophetically from an unmade grave—dawned solemnly on my mind. My aunt's secret was a secret no longer.

MARGINS.

We all have a margin. The very poorest of us, outside confessed pauperism, have just a little more than is absolutely necessary to keep body and soul together—just a little bit of extra fringe to play with at our pleasure. And it is in the employment of this margin that we show our real disposition of mind, and prove what is our idea of the best things of life. There are some people who put it all into pleasures. However poor they may be they always have enough for theatres and tea-gardens and Crystal Palace fêtes, and sea-side jaunts, and the like. Go where you will, at considerable cost to your own tolerably well-filled pocket, and as you suppose at considerable cost to the pockets of all the company, these poor yet affluent people are sure to turn up, radiant if shabby, seeing everything, and enjoying everything quite as royally as if their units were tens and they counted their income by bank-notes, instead of small cash. You do not see a trace of anxiety on them, nor a hint of the pinchings and privations at home; they do not carry their meagre larder about with them; and though they are almost always shabbily dressed, they are as self-content as if they were the best attired in the place. They go to see, and not to be seen; and their glory is to be able to say afterwards that they have been to such and such a place, and assisted at such and such a fête. And, dear! they looked out for you, and made sure they would meet you, and how was it that you did not go? You could not afford it? What an idea! Why, you are better off than they are, yet they could manage it. They like to see what is going on, they say—and they carry out their liking; and a poorly furnished larder and faded finery do not count in the summing up. These are the people who go to Epsom races by train, third-class, and to fêtes in omnibuses; who are frequent in penny boats, and know all the cheapest modes of transit everywhere; people who care for pleasure not for show, for racket not for comfort. Well! they enjoy life in their own way, and for the most part are easy-tempered, jolly kind of folks, who never make troubles which can be avoided, and who do not add to those they cannot escape.

Then others employ their margin in keeping up a certain domestic style in the matter of "buttons" and the like. A page and a charwoman, if they can compass nothing better; but at any rate the page and his buttons and his

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little laced hat. To these people domestic honour and social salvation lie in the form and figure of the person who opens the door, and in the names they give to those who serve them. Thus, they speak of their slipshod workhouse girl as "my maid;" and throw dust in your eyes by the grandeur of their vocabulary. A maid-of-all-work, on ten pounds a year and find herself, is "my cook;" and the handy man about the place who comes to do odd jobs as he is wanted, and who scarcely knows a potato from an artichoke, is "my groom," or "my gardener," according to the occasion on hand. Their margin goes to keeping up appearances in live kitchen-stuff, poor bodies! and they do not think they could employ it better.

Others keep up as unremunerative an appearance in other directions, and at a more tremendous application of their scanty margin. These are the people who go to second-rate evening parties in private broughams, while their friends, with thrice their incomes, are content to go in common cabs. I know that it is only good policy to go to certain grand houses carefully appointed: or if unable to compass these careful appointments, then not to go at all; but I am speaking now of second-rate houses, where neither hosts nor guests are of any standing; but where people of this kind think they must go with a splash and a dash, as if their income were generous enough to cover a multitude of false pretences. Heaven and their creditors know how poor they are; cellar and larder and wardrobe, each witnesses the same sad fact; landlord and tax-gatherer could attest it; but, if they go out, they say, they will go as they ought; so they spend fifteen shillings on a private brougham, and think their margin justifies the outlay.

Others keep up appearances and make a necessary of the superfluous in giving parties —parties of the same stamp as the bankrupt's brougham which comes to them. They pinch for six days in the week that they may have an evening reception on the seventh; or they pinch all the year for the annual ball or dinner which it has so long been their custom to give—a custom begun, perhaps, in brighter days and when they had a margin worth speaking of. But they forget that old copy-book axiom about circumstances altering cases, and go on under Z as they had gone on under A, without reflecting that the whole alphabet lies between. I know nothing more melancholy than these shady parties given by people with small margins. One cannot refuse to see the numerous wants meeting one at every turn—the drawing-room so sadly needing paint and paper, that worn oilcloth in the hall, that ragged carpet in the dining-room; one cannot pretend for a moment that these cakes, and custards, and sherries, and clarets, poor as they may all be, are out of a superfluity which they by no means exhaust. One feels as if one is answerable somehow for the family needs, by thus assisting at the malappropriation of that modest margin; one longs to say, "Repair and renew before you attempt to entertain;" but what can the most outspoken among us do! It is their way of viewing life, their idea of the best things and the most necessary to be observed; and as it *is* a margin, no matter whence filched, they surely have a right to dispose of it as they like; and we can only lament at what seems to us mal-appropriation, and wish that we could order all things according to our own individual liking. This is merely human nature. Do we not all wish we could order our neighbours' lives as we think best, and manipulate the whole moral and social world, until it took the form which alone seems true and beautiful to our souls?

Then there are folks who put every available farthing of margin into dress. Whatever else is wanting they are always in the height of the fashion, always have irreproachable gloves and dainty boots, always look well got up and handsomely attired. It is a marvel how they do it. They seem to heap a fortune on their backs; but ten to one if you ask them, they will make out that they spend less than you, in your homely last year's russet, while they are flourishing about in gorgeous apparel which makes peacocks themselves look dowdy. I have known a great many lavish ladies of small means and narrow margins, who have gravely assured me that their wardrobes cost less than those of certain of their friends notorious for their constancy to old clothes. It is all in the method, they say, simpering; and you are free to believe in that magic method, if you like, and to wish that you could find the way to satisfactory imitation. Still, you know that silk and broad cloth and gloves and velvets are not to be had for the value of so many old songs; and you can pretty well approximate their cost. Granting any amount of personal luck, by which a shilling's worth can be bought for sixpence; granting any latitude you like for trade price and warehouse favour, there always remains the sixpence; and even trade price and warehouse favour leave a hard core of substance that has to be paid for. No, I never for myself heard an explanation of the mystery of good dress with narrow margins that was worth listening to, and I, for one, am content to let the mystery remain where it is. Indeed, one would be almost sorry to have a vulgar explanation of a standing miracle; and one would rather gape at the marvel of how people without twopence halfpenny a year can dress with those who have fivepence or even sixpence, and yet not come into the bankruptcy court before their time, than learn the secret of the shifts by which it is done. Mr. Trollope, in one of his novels, I think it is Framley Parsonage, speaks of this unfailing margin for personal needs and pleasures to be found bordering the narrowest income of certain people. Men who are being chased by duns, and whose next lines will fall in Whitecross-street, have always money for cabs and cigars and theatres and railway fares, first-class. It is only simpletons who cannot compass unnecessary expenses; and who cares for the sorrows of simpletons? Who

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regards their privations as fit subjects for elegy, or their self-restraint as in any way worthy of eulogy? Men who have no margin even fringing Whitecross-street are men out of the social pale.

Some spend their margin on food. They will not have second-class food of any kind; inferior joints a penny a pound cheaper than the best are an abomination to them; "stickings," even for soup and stock, they will not put up with; the prime joints of the primest meat, for a fancy price, that is their little vanity, and the way in which they spend their extra. These are the people who pride themselves in giving you dinners not to be had for love or money anywhere but at their tables. Not dinner parties, remember, but snug little dinners to one or two at most; and costing as much as a week's supply for the whole family. The tablecloth may be worn and crumpled; the dishes may be chipped and broken, of odd patterns and no two pieces fitting; the (plated) silver may be worn-out; but the champagne is exquisite, the dishes would do honour to a *cordon bleu*, and nothing is forgotten, down to the caviare and the olives. One or two such dinners would have bought new table linen and a new dinner-service; but the margin goes in the food not the platters, and not what one sees but what one eats is considered the first necessity of civilised life. I have eaten dinners fit for a royal table in their degree, in a room and with appointments below the squalor of a fifth-rate eating-house. They were costly dinners in relation with my friend's income and mode of life; very costly dinners; but that was his way of underscoring his margin, and it was not for me to take him to task for the application. I cannot say that I would have ever imitated him; but in all probability he would not have imitated me in my application of my margin; so we were quits. As no man rides his neighbour's hobby with the same bridle, so no man writes off his margin under the same heading; and what is absolutely an essential with one, is only an accident with another, to be taken or rejected at pleasure.

There is a certain application of margin of which I scarcely know how to speak. It is so good in its motive that no one likes to decry it as excessive: and yet it is excessive and foolish too. This is the education which some poor people give their children. "The best of educations, my dear; we have saved, and pinched, and toiled, and denied ourselves all these years that our children might be well educated. It was all we could do for them, and we have done it." Yes, that is all very well; but the best education may be had for a less cost than what our friends have given, and there is no use in paying fancy prices, even for Latin and Greek. The kind of education I am speaking of now consists in sending children of second-class fortunes to first-class schools, where they are the poorest of the lot, and where they associate with boys and girls whose acquaintance they cannot keep up in after life, because their respective spheres will never touch. It is not so much what they learn there, because schools of lower price give the same amount and quality of teaching; but it is the prestige of the school itself, the social standing of the pupils, which fascinate the parents. The grammar school close at hand gives at least as sound instruction; but our butcher's sons are there, and our grocer sends his boys too, and though both butcher and grocer could buy us out and out, and though their boys are as well behaved lads as our own, yet the name sticks, and we would rather pay to efface it. It is doubtful if we are doing our young ones a kindness all this while, and if it would not have been better to have given them as good an education, with less costly fringes to the bill. We are only preparing heart-aches for the time when the difference of spheres shall be fully understood, and the great landed proprietor will think the poor apothecary no fit companion for himself and his wife, for all that they were schoolfellows in the old days at Bunbury's, and the future pill-maker beat the young lord of the manor at every exercise of wits. It is the same with girls who are sent to schools beyond their home surroundings. It is all very nice and kind of parents who apply their margin in this unselfish manner; but for poor Lottie and Lulu, with their dingy frocks and scanty wardrobe, set in the midst of little birds of paradise bedizened and bedecked, it is a trial for which not even the honour of being taught by the great signor or the still greater signora wholly compensates. Girls have a small martyrdom to go through when thrown thus into the midst of richer companions. There is an activity in the feminine intellect in the matter of invidious comparisons, and a penetration as to relative values, which makes life very hard to those not of the more favoured kind; and if papa and mamma could fully realise the mortifications and annoyances to which their darlings are submitted, they would eschew their dream of a good education under that form, and accept the simpler arrangements to be had for half the cost and none of the pains.

Some people go into society as their means of getting rid of such spare cash as may cling about their threadbare purses. They set out with the professed inability to return the compliment; but, in spite of this, evening after evening you may meet them in good houses, thoroughly well dressed, and always agreeable, conscientiously doing their best. They know that they must pay somehow for these invitations. They cannot pay in kind—in dinners or in suppers—so they pay in talking well; in singing without the need of pressing; in being willing to make themselves foils for the more brilliant; in taking a hand at whist when wanted, and losing their penny points with a grace; or even in playing dummy. This is the coin in which they pay for advantages which the margin of their fortunes is too narrow to compass otherwise. All that this margin can do is to supply them with the dress, ornaments, and conveyance

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necessary for the occasion; and they take care that it shall supply them with these to perfection. I have known many of these people in my time, and have always wondered how they did it. They look so spruce and well-preserved; they conceal so thoroughly all the jags and tags of poverty, that I am for ever lost in amazement as to how it is all managed, and look upon their power of making a show upon nothing as among the uncatalogued marvels of the time. It is done partly by a rigid line of demarcation drawn between home and society. I have seen my friends under both flags, and, truly, as unlike as is the creeping worm to the painted butterfly, so is the fresh, well-preserved, and perfectly appointed creature of society, when in the world, to himself in his home character. Anything is good enough for him. House, food, garments, service—what does it signify? So long as they can pinch and nip here, to spend all they save on society, they are content, and think that they are carrying out the design of their creation. Butterflies abroad, dirty little grubs at home—that is how they do it.

Some spend their margin on literature. They see all the new books, and are familiar with all the magazines; books which you, my dear sir, with even your income and leisure, have not seen, they have read from preface to finis, and judge you small and miserable in proportion to your ignorance. This, again, is one of those small domestic wonders which to this hour remain dark riddles to me. Where do they find time for all this reading? and where do they get the money for it? Books which I want to read and cannot afford to buy, and could not find time for even if I had bought them, my studious impecunious friends both buy and study diligently. How it is done I cannot divine; all I know is that it is the employment of the margin; but the very existence of a margin which can be so employed is a wonder to me.

Some employ their margin on flowers, some on horses, some on music, and not a few on doctors' fees and chemists' bills. In fact, I think that these last belong to margins in the proportion of ninety-nine to a hundred, and that, given a monetary narrowness absolutely free of bordering, both doctors' fees and chemists' bills would become, for the most part, fantastic follies. Then some people, very near to godliness, spend their money on cleanliness. However poor they may be, you never see them dirty, squalid, or neglected. They live in a halo of freshness; their houses are faultless, their personal appointments absolutely without stain; but then they spend all their spare cash in cleaning materials and renewals, and are never so happy as when they are polishing, and scrubbing, and washing, and cleaning, and putting a new face and a better gloss upon any old odds and ends they may possess. People with twice their income have not half their niceness; and somehow they contrive to look better in their dainty poverty than nine-tenths of the well endowed who have not their keen sense of sweetness.

For myself, I know of no better way of spending one's margin. It is undoubtedly to be preferred to any of those of which I have been speaking; even to that not unamiable one of making presents, which is also a manner of writing off a surplus not to be harshly judged under certain aspects. It is not to be commended when practised unnecessarily. I know one or two people, certainly very ill off in worldly goods, who are always making presents to their better provided friends. It may be only an antimacassar of the last new pattern, or a collar, or a pair of cuffs, or a penwiper, or a set of d'Oyleys, or some trifle of the same kind; but does not the least of these trifles cost money, and where do they get the money from, small in amount as it may be? It is very good of them, no one denies that; but at times it is grievously embarrassing. One does not know what to do for or with poor people who give one useless presents; one cannot pay them for their time or material, and one cannot refuse to take their offering; it is a perplexity, not productive of gratitude. If the presents come from the poor to the still poorer, that is another matter; that is good and grand and generous; but I am speaking now only of the little nothings given to those who do not want them by those who do want the money they cost, and the consequent uneasiness at what one feels to be a mal-appropriation of margin. This is not, however, a very general form of reducing one's surplus, so it is not necessary to expend much virtuous opposition thereon. The mania for giving is not one of the most prevalent in these our days; and, after all, there are worse manias, all things considered, provided the gifts are made honestly, in love, and not thrown out as sprats wherewith to catch herrings. Then, indeed, they deserve condemnation, not praise; and to be trampled under foot, not carried honourably in the hand.

THE DEVIL OUTWITTED.

AN HUNGARIAN POPULAR TALE.

In those dreadful days when devils had full power to assume various mortal forms, and in pursuit of their avocation to wander over the wide earth, a very old malignant devil left his subterranean abode. Having heard of the wonderful bliss which was enjoyed by human beings in their marriage life, he determined himself to make an attempt to enter into that happy state.

But he was so old and so ugly that by no device and no disguise could he conceal the deformity of his person, and every approach he made towards a pretty maiden was repelled with contumely and scorn. This grieved and exasperated him beyond all bounds, and he sunk into the depths of despair, having exhausted every art of fascination and eloquence. In this miserable state of things he determined to address himself to a hideous ancient hag who had already sent six husbands to their graves;

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but finding nothing preferable to her, he offered her his hand, swearing fidelity for life and death.

We will not describe the bride, with all her charms, except to say that the venerable chronicler, who has recorded the story for our delight and instruction, declares that, wicked as was the devil, the devil's wife was tenfold worse; and he adds that the outward deformity of the witch was charming when contrasted with the vileness of her inner nature.

On the wedding-day, immediately after the ceremony, she began to torment her husband, scolding and quarrelling without rhyme or reason, which he could not stop for even a minute. This was the devil's introduction to domestic felicity; and he soon found that his late infernal residence itself was paradise, when compared with earth and such a witch of a woman for a wedded wife.

He could not bear it long. Full of shame and sorrow, he cursed the whole race of womankind, and his own choice above every other. He wandered away into the deepest woods and the wildest wildernesses, blessing the fortune that had given sufficient strength to his weary legs to carry him so far off from his beautiful bride.

And so he strayed in melancholy mood into a thicket, where he saw a little meagre man busied in digging up and gathering together various roots and herbs. The man looked upon him with a friendly but gloomy and embarrassed countenance, and the devil soon discovered that he had no picture of human happiness before him; but he tenderly inquired into the man's history and employment. The poor botanist answered with sighs that he was indeed an unfortunate creature whom a bad wife had brought to misery; having squandered his belongings, and so plagued his existence that he felt it a relief to occupy himself by collecting simples in the desert in order to escape from that female house-devil.

The story produced on the devil's mind a fellow feeling of sympathy, and he narrated to the little man the experience of his own mortal felicity. They were soon bound together in the strongest bonds of friendship; they discussed their mutual grievances, and determined to work together for their common relief, and to help one another in partnership. The little man collected a great supply of roots and herbs, and the devil, whose hatred against the whole race of mortal man had been greatly sharpened by his more intimate acquaintance with the better half, used every art of witchery and deceit to induce people to trade with his associate. He possessed first one and then another, and did not come out of them until the little man had come to cure them with his mysterious medicines; and such was the success of these devices that they collected heaps of money, and so long had their traffic been carried on that the woods and wastes failed to present them with a sufficient supply of simples for the demand. Meanwhile with the accumulation of wealth the passion of avarice entered into the soul of the meagre little man, and he determined for the future to disregard the agreement he had made with the devil. He deceived his comrade as often as he could, and, instead of giving half their earnings, he often handed to him less than a third. The devil's sharpsightedness soon discovered the roguery, and he only waited a favourable opportunity for taking becoming revenge.

He entered into a peasant girl, and maddened her with such a fearful frenzy that half the affrighted villagers fled. The meagre man came with his healing herbs; but though the girl was exorcised by every charm and by every influence that had hitherto in every case succeeded, the devil that possessed her declared that he would never quit her, hurled scorn and defiance at the exorciser, and loudly shouted out that he despised his power. This sudden and unexpected obstinacy of the devil placed the little man in the greatest perplexity; but in his wild despair he dreamt of a plan by which he could not only drive the devil out of the maiden, but out of the universal world.

The people had abandoned all hope of the recovery of the maiden, when the little man came forward and said to the devil; "Thou couldst not cure the girl, I will call thy wife to help thee!"

Hardly were the words uttered when the devil began to tremble, and his agitation made all the bones of the maiden crack. She fell in convulsions to the ground, but her misery soon came to an end. The devil thought it better to hurry back to his own proper regions than to wait the coming of his wife. He disappeared in smoke, but left a disagreeable smell behind him.

FREAKS IN FLANDERS.

It is astonishing how race, and language, and manners survive the changes of territorial distribution. Their roots in the soil are perennial; not to be grubbed up by politicians and diplomatists, nor torn out by war and conquest, nor swept away even by the current of time. Man is a remora, or sucking-fish, who holds to the spot to which he has attached himself with an adhesiveness which is transmitted from generation to generation.

Look at Flanders. What changes of masters and dynasties it has witnessed; what partitions and parcellings it has undergone! Not long ago, a natty little monument was erected at Zuytpeene (Department of the North), to commemorate the battle of Cassel, by which that tract of country was annexed to France. The Flemish pompiers, or firemen, in gold uniform, took part in the proceedings—perhaps, because they could not help it—as if it were an honour to them that their forefathers should have been swept into the greedy monarch's net. But for the result of that hard-fought struggle French Flanders might now form part of Belgium, en-

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joying constitutional liberty, instead of being incorporated by a nation for whom, whether empire or republic, genuine rational liberty, as we understand it, would seem to be for ever a mirage.

Flanders, certainly, ought to be a fragmentary land—a broken cake, one bit of which is in one sovereign's pocket and another in another's; and it is, paradoxically, a whole, as homogeneous at bottom as a gentleman's estate within a ring fence. It has been Spanish, Dutch, and what not besides; it is now partly French and partly Belgian; but to whomsoever it pays its taxes, it remains Flemish to the backbone.

There is French Flanders, then, and Belgian Flanders; but they are one natural tract which an invisible boundary cannot separate. When you have crossed out of France into Belgium, you cannot believe that the move has been really made till you find you get tobacco for next to nothing, and have to pay turnpike tolls before your carriage can pass. In other respects the continuity is unbroken. There is the same blunt, coarse, matter-of-fact language which nobody ever thinks of learning, but which anybody who knows something of German may roughly understand; the language which proves its relationship to English by all its naughty words coinciding with our own; which startles you with syllables plainly spoken or printed, which, with us, never meet ears or eyes polite; a language whose "yah-yah" conversation sounds something between a quack and a neigh. What contrasted forms of speech with French smooth-spokenness! France displays, "Ici on donne à manger," "Here they *give* to eat," on pothouse signs. The genius of Flanders is content to tell you, "Hier verkoopt men dranken," "Here they *sell* drink." The same of manners. You are forbidden, in legible black and white, to spit inside a Flemish church! And the word for "spit"—excuse it, reader, but etymology is deaf to delicate remonstrance—is the mother of our (we have long since put it in the lumber-room) "spew." In short, what Teniers innocently painted, Flanders innocently speaks, dreaming no harm. "Huis te huren" for house to let, "gist" for yeast, "browery" for brewery, "wolle" for wool, "coke" for cake (plural "koeken"), and scores of others, hardly require an English interpreter.

The whole of Flanders, Belgian or French, is a land of good living; a country of milk and honey, butter and cheese, fat kine and sleek beeves, and saddle-donkeys to go to market with; a paradise of rich pastures and tall trim trees, of hops, hop-poles, and cameline, whose seed gives oil, and whose stalks make brooms: of wealthy, thatch-roofed, one-storied farms, the inner brickwork of whose windows, painted sky-blue, gives you the idea of an oriental lady with her eyelids stained; of little dolls'-house chapels, and cream and eggs, and paved roads; where native pebbles are curiosities and stones are gems; with dust in summer and mud in winter, as behoves a region brought down by the streams and thrown up by the sea.

And the carriages! Lumbrous, cumbrous affairs; commodious enough when once you are inside them, but all "built on Mount Ararat after the subsidence of the waters," and only draggable by horses with a touch of the elephant in their framework. Look at that heavy three-wheeled tumbrel! It contains timber enough to build a small house. That waggon, again, would carry a detachment of soldiers, baggage, band, ammunition, and all. That spherical yellow coach, called a "citrouille" or gourd, is the Globe formerly in Leicester-square, stuck upon wheels. What a colossal caricature of Cinderella's pumpkin! Instead of just holding one fairy-like damsel, it might have played the part of the horse at the Siege of Troy. And behold that wonderful, that phenomenal carriage, which fills one corner of the roomy inn-yard! It has seats inside, in tiers, exactly like those of the pit at the play, ranged in three rows, with a fop's-alley running up the middle, to hold a public nine in number, sitting three abreast—the whole rolling on only two but most solid wheels, and drawn by two horses; the object being (besides sociability) to avoid the payment of one sou at each oft-recurring turnpike-gate. A two-wheeled carriage pays only three sous, while every four-wheeler contributes four.

Religion in Flanders is of a piece with the rest; heavy, material, costly, hearty, with displays of money's worth amounting to magnificence. Noble churches, gorgeous pictures, elaborate carvings, splendid processions, glittering banners, precious gems, conventual communities, liberal restoration of ecclesiastical buildings, strict abstinences, severe discipline, bodily penances, such as kneeling on the bare ground with the arms held out horizontally, prayer measured by quantity and duration instead of by fervour and devotion, soul-stripping confession, self-inflicted punishment, and clumsy emblems are all the very reverse of spiritual and refined forms of faith and worship.

These characteristics harmonise with the nature of the land. Their accordance strikes you all the more from the evident discordance of other things which have no right to intrude their presence. While the bowery roads, with their central pavement, are all that can be wished in point of fitness; fir-trees and pines are singularly out of place in a highly cultivated agricultural plain. It is almost by compulsion and necessity that the Flemings derive beauty out of irregularity. The monotonous level of their fertile soil leads them to seek variety in broken forms, unsymmetrical areas, wedge-shaped gable-ends, stories of unequal height, windows and doors with none corresponding to them. The result is that a country, naturally the most unpicturesque, abounds with the most picturesque of objects.

In consequence, perhaps, of their restricted language—which confines them within a few square leagues as tightly as a tether fastens a

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cow—the Flemings are eminently a clannish race. In the French army, the French Flemings hang together like bees at swarming-time; Belgian Flemings, even at leisure hours and meal times, congregate into companies. Young people, both girls and boys, run together in distinct and closely-grouped parties, like young domestic animals turned out to grass; as if Flemish babies came, like lambs, all at once, in springtide falls.

When grown up, they form themselves into bands and societies as naturally as they shave their beards and light their pipes. They do everything in troops, by whole populations. Everybody goes to mass on Sunday mornings. Any one who did not, unless bedridden or paralytic, would be considered, not a heretic—for tabernacles and quakers' meeting-houses are things unheard of and unknown—but an original, a misanthrope, a Timon of Athens.

In the villages, after mass, all the males go to the public-house—which supplies "double bier" under the sign of De Roose, or the Oliphant without a Castle, or the Bruyn Visch, that is to say the Red Herring—which is opposite, behind, or beside the church, the skittle-ground being often adjacent to the cemetery. Beer-drinking bowers thereby enjoy a cheering vista of crosses and tomb-stones. A footpath conducts to the pastimes of the living by traversing the resting-place of departed topers. It is a grim Dance of Death, illustrated by subjects in the flesh. There are weekly tableaux vivants exemplifying the nearness of the cradle to the grave. The skeleton almost shakes hands with the smoker. The corpse keeps company with its carousing relatives. The boors (bauers, husbandmen) disport themselves for a little interval before joining their forefathers who sleep hard by.

Market, too, is another famous opportunity for the interchange of social converse, unintelligible to the world at large. "How triste, how dull it must be for you, not to speak Flemish!" once ejaculated a dame who sold "goeden drank," but who could not, though she would, converse with me. And so they enjoy amongst themselves exclusively their interminable bargainings in the most cacophonous of gibberishes, the very women entering into the pig-trade in order to have their share of the fun. And so, all summer long (as well as before and after) they get up national merry-makings which are equivalent to taking the census of the district. The whole population elects itself into a club for the promotion of home-made sports and gambols, the performance of self-acted pageants and plays, where the players and the spectators are so nearly identical that they sometimes happen to be one and the same.

The blue-frocked archers of one locality go and shoot with the black-capped long-bows of another, distant a quarter of a day's pedestrian journey, or seven minutes and a half by rail. The Choral Society of Schoutenhoul pays a fraternal visit to the Orpheonists of Raspenscraep; the band and banners of Puffenblowe swell the cavalcades of Staerenstrut; the chaffinch-blinders of Katschenkagem hold matches with the amateurs of Poketheryseout.

For, I regret it, but truth compels the record that blinded chaffinches are another Flemish institution which seems indigenous and permanent. When I first saw the land more than thirty years ago, they had every appearance of being an ancient custom. I have seen it often since, and there they are, poor things, in the smallest possible cages, still reiterating their peculiar cry. There is a French saying, "As gay as a chaffinch": the Flemish chaffinches are very sad to see; and their monotonous chant is one of the most melancholy things to listen to that I know of. Before you reach Flanders, none are to be seen; but in travelling from France towards the Belgian frontier, you observe, hung out from every window, against every wall, in every nook and corner, tiny cages, each containing a single chaffinch, which unceasingly utters the melodic phrase that can hardly be termed its song.

At six o'clock of a bright May morning, the bird-fanciers meet in a gay green meadow, with the intention of going to mass afterwards. You can fancy the flavour of their frothing beer and the smell of their multifuming pipes. Distinctive badges mark the respective clubs—a feather in their hat, a rosette in their button-hole, or a gaudy sash around their waist—harmless vanities to which the Flemings are as incorrigibly addicted as to chaffinch-blinding; for they do not appear to be aware that chaffinches can feel as well as utter seven hundred and fifty chants per hour.

Flanders, as a trip for holiday-makers, has the double advantage of being easily got at and easily departed from. To effect your retreat, however, from the Belgian portion, unless by sea, the French custom-houses must not be left out of consideration. They are sharp, strict, and severe in their search. Their main object is to prevent Belgian tobacco from entering France. It is after *that* that they poke, and feel, and spy. Other contraband articles—obnoxious political literature, hostile pamphlets, satires offensive to the Emperor's person, prohibited photographs—are of comparatively easy introduction, although their possession, if known, might be productive of inconvenience. But tobacco, in all its shapes and phases, whether prepared for snuffing, quidding, or smoking, is the forbidden thing to be ferreted out and seized; so let returning travellers beware.

There is one sure way of avoiding every danger; namely, to eschew all contact with and all concern in anything that is contraband. But, like several other moral maxims, it is easier to preach than to practise, above all to get others to practise it. You can answer for yourself; you can't answer for your belongings. People dearly love things from foreign parts, not because they are better than, but because they are different to, what they are used to.

M. Frederic Passy has defined man as an ex-

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changing animal. Forbid exchange by protective duties, or throw great difficulties in the way, and, in both man and woman, you assuredly have smuggling animals. Neither of the sexes can resist it. People living just within the French frontier *do* smuggle, and *do* get caught now and then; which they don't much mind: and also do succeed, to their heart's delight—the male population with cheap tobacco mainly (few care a straw for prohibited portraits or literature), the females with embroidered muslins and lace, or anything else in the forbidden novelty line. Still, it is a ridiculous and undignified sight to behold a tall, strong fellow laid on a board to have his boots pulled off and be otherwise examined; to hear a lady requested to walk into an adjoining room in company with a female searcher (some custom-house officer's wife), who enjoys the task with expectant inquisitiveness. Therefore, I always urge, "Bring *nothing*;" and so have avoided all unpleasantness, to self and own proper kin at least.

Never, on returning into France across the Swiss or the Belgian frontier, have I been treated with so much apparent forbearance as by the douaniers at Steenworde (between Poperingues and Cassell). But, in the first place, I had given my name and address (to enable the carriage to return duty-free) when passing that station on our way into Belgium; so that, if we were caught tripping, they knew where to lay hands upon us. And, secondly, the tenderness was only apparent. As a matter of principle, we scorned being the bearers of any printed insult to the chief of the State; and, as a matter of precaution, if only to avoid formalities and trouble, we had no tobacco—not a pinch, nor a cigar, nor a pipeful, nor a cheekful. Our driver only had a wisp of birds'-eye in his side-pocket (which he openly avowed), to console his cravings along the road. We had no trunk, portmanteau, only carpet-bags and baskets. All were taken out. A small hand-bag—the principal inspector or brigadier said—it was needless to open. The larger bags were unlocked, and (while our backs were turned and our attention directed to a subaltern searching the carriage itself) he adroitly thrust his hand down each compartment of the bag, stealthily smelling his fingers each time he withdrew them.

It was a masterstroke, a touch of professional skill deserving laudatory record. There was no vulgar turning out and tumbling the contents of the bag, what was *not* in it being ascertained by negative proof. The trick, too, was executed with such finished address that it would have passed off unobserved, but for an accidental glance cast in that direction by one of our party. No doubt, that inspector, by long experience and practice, had acquired for tobacco the scent of a bloodhound. His fingers had been educated to absorb, and his nose to detect, the slightest trace or trail of the weed.

After the performance of this very effectual and, as he thought, secret mode of search, we were told, with a patronising wave of the hand, that "the bags might be closed and reconsigned to their places. He *saw* we had nothing to declare liable to duty." And thus all brutal emptying of the bags, all tossing about of night and day clothes, all offence, in short, to personal privacies, was politely and pleasantly escaped. And I hold that the plan of searching tourists' luggage by the scent is as good as any, better than most, until the time arrives when all search shall be obsolete.

Our "visitor," however, might perhaps have been a little aided by physiognomical skill. Shutting one eye and peering sharply with the other, he examined our countenances one by one, tacitly inquiring of himself whether we were Guilty or Not Guilty, before proceeding to any further investigation. Arriving at a verdict of at least Not Proven, he then brought his olfactory tactics into play.

But this is not all. We proceeded to Cassel to enjoy the hospitalities of the Hôtel du Sauvage. Mont Cassel deserves to be ascended, although it won't procure your admission to the Alpine Club. It is even worth a few days' sojourn. Pure is the air, lovely the view, excellent and abundant the fare. There are plenty of pretty walks about and around it, all full of ups and downs tending to the development of calves and the strengthening of crural muscles.

Half-way up the hill on which Cassel stands is the wigwam of an official whose business is to receive the export duties on articles going *out* of France. He is a faded old fogy of waning occupation (owing to new-fangled treaties of commerce and other devices of the Evil One), but not the less self-important for that. There he sits, in the dignity of plain clothes, now threadbare and rusty, but which once were black. Beside him stands his private orderly, in uniform, both on the look-out for travellers on whom they may pounce and impress with the idea that they are a couple of somebodies. So, because we are coming *from* Belgium, they authoritatively stop our carriage, as a feudal lord would pull up a merchant's string of mules.

"But we have already been searched," one of our party remonstrates.

"That is no business of mine," the fogy answers, in a hollow voice suited for the utterance of Fee, fo, fum. "I have my duty to fulfil." ["My duty," in order to keep my place, being to make believe that I have something to do.]

So he peeps in at the carriage window, takes up a book, and gravely turns over its leaves, as if searching for dangerous passages. But the book, he ought to know from its binding, is a publication authorised by bishops, and signed with a †. We feel inclined to ask if he can read, but do not for fear of hurting his feelings. His curiosity satisfied, he returns the volume to its place; and then, solemnly walking round the carriage, like a witch performing an incantation, he taps it with his knuckles here and

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there, sounding it for hidden deposits of the weed. That done, after deep consideration, he says to his orderly, "There is nothing!"

The orderly ponders awhile, and then, like Echo, responds, "There is nothing!"

"No; there is nothing!" rejoins the fogy chief. "Allez! Go!"

The saying "Allez" in a pompous tone seems to be the principal duty which if he did not fulfil what would be the good of not suppressing his place? Poor old solemnity, adieu! or rather, au revoir! Doubtless when smoking your pipe of seized tobacco and sipping your smallest of beer at home, you are very different from the employé who has to say "Allez" in front of his wigwam.

AT HOME IN STATEN ISLAND.

[For the proper understanding of the following verses, written by a home-sick Englishman while resident in Staten Island, near New York, it may be necessary to state that in North America there are neither daisies, nor primroses, nor skylarks, nor nightingales, nor any bird with a musical note except the mocking bird, which is not often heard north of Maryland. The "dogwood" and the "catalpa," of which mention is made, are flowering trees of great beauty in the vernal landscape.]

My true love clasped me by the hand,
And from our garden alley,
Looked o'er the landscape seamed with sea,
And rich with hill and valley.
And said, "We've found a pleasant place
As fair as thine and my land,
A calm abode, a flowery home
In sunny Staten Island.

"Behind us lies the teeming town
With lust of gold grown frantic;
Before us glitters o'er the bay,
The peaceable Atlantic.
We hear the murmur of the sea—
A monotone of sadness,
But not a whisper of the crowd,
Or echo of its madness.

"See how the dogwood sheds its bloom
Through all the greenwood mazes,
As white as the untrodden snow
That hides in shady places.
See how the fair catalpa spreads
Its azure flowers in masses,
Bell-shaped, as if to woo the wind
To ring them as it passes.

"See stretching o'er the green hill side,
The haunt of cooing turtle,
The clambering vine, the branching elm,
The maple and the myrtle,
The undergrowth of flowers and fern
In many-tinted lustre,
And parasites that climb or creep,
And droop, and twist, and cluster.

"Behold the gorgeous butterflies
That in the sunshine glitter,
The bluebird, oriole, and wren
That dart and float and twitter:
And humming birds that peer like bees
In stamen and in pistil,
And, over all, the bright blue sky
Translucent as a crystal.

"The air is balmy, not too warm,
And all the landscape sunny
Seems, like the Hebrew Paradise,
To flow with milk and honey.
Here let us rest, a little while—
Not rich enough to buy land,
And pass a summer well content
In bowery Staten Island."

"A little while," I made reply
"A little while—one summer:
For, pleasant though the land may be
To any fresh new comer,
I miss the primrose in the dell,
The blue-bell in the wild wood,
And daisy glinting through the grass,
The comrade of my childhood.

"I miss the ivy on the wall,
The grey church in the meadow,
The fragrant hawthorn in the lanes,
And all the beechen shadow.
And more than all that proves to me
It never can be my land,
I miss the music of the groves
In leafy Staten Island.

"There's not a bird in glen or shaw
That has a note worth hearing;
Unvocal all as barn-door fowls,
Or land-rails in the clearing.
Give me the skylark far aloft
To heaven up-singing, soaring;
Or nightingale, at close of day,
Lamenting but adoring!

"Give me the throstle on the bough,
The blackbird and the linnet,
Or any bird that sings a song
As if its heart were in it.
And not your birds of gaudier plume,
That you can see a mile hence,
And only need, to be admired,
The priceless charm of silence.

"There's drone, I grant, of wasps and bees,
And sanguinary hornets,
That blow their trumps as loud and shrill
As regimental cornets.
And all night long the bull-frogs croak
With melancholy crooning,
Like large bass-viols out of gear,
And tortured in the tuning.

"And then those nimble poisonous fiends,
The insatiable mosquitoes
That come in armies noon and night,
To plague, if not to eat us.
The devil well deserves his name,*
That sent them to the dry land;
Let us away across the sea,
Far, far from Staten Island!"

"Ah, well!" my true love said and smiled,
"There's shade to every glory;
There's no true paradise on earth
Except in song or story.

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* Beelzebub, the lord of the flies

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The place is fair, and while thou'rt here,
Thy land shall still be my land,
And all the Eden earth affords
Be ours in Staten Island."

DAVID ROBERTS.

On the 24th of October, 1796, a certain honest shoemaker and his wife, by name James and Christina Roberts, living at Stockbridge near Edinburgh, had born to them their fifth and youngest child—a son. Things were cross and times were hard enough with the village cobbler; but he and his wife were douce, worthy, God-fearing people, who worked on in uncomplaining diligence through sun and shade alike, by dint of thrift and good management contriving to make both scanty ends meet in some kind of cotter decency, and, though ever acquainted with poverty, yet never losing the self-respect of independence. They brought up their children well—the two, at least, who remained to them; paid threepence or fourpence a week with David, the youngest boy, to keep him at a dame's school, but more, as he says, that he should not be run over by carts or drowned in the Water of Leith, than for any intellectual gain to be had for the money; took them duly to kirk in braw duds honest-like; and observed the Sabbath as few of their neighbours did. For the Stockbridge men were a godless race, Mrs. Roberts used to say—masons, carters, quarrymen, carpenters, and the like; and the quiet shoemaker and his wife had little sympathy therewith.

At eight years of age young Davie was sent to a school in Edinburgh, to be kicked and cuffed as was and is too frequently the case. In consequence of which rough treatment he took a not unnatural dislike to schooling by rule of stick, and expressed his determination to leave, and become apprenticed to some trade. The question was, to what trade? The parents wanted him to be a shoemaker like his father before him; but fortunately for the future Royal Academician, his artistic powers had been already discovered by friends and patrons capable of judging; for long before this time, he says, he had the most intense love for pictures, although the masterpieces which so delighted him were only halfpenny picture-books such as the Life and Death of Cock Robin, Little Red Riding Hood, and the like. Sometimes, indeed, there were panoramas and wild-beast shows on the Earthen Mound—the site of the future Royal Scottish Academy's Exhibition—and the booths and caravans were decorated with magnificent representations of the treasures within; affording glorious studies to the lad, who used to show his mother what they were like "by scratches on the whitewashed wall made with the end of a burned stick and a bit of keel"—that is, red chalk. In illustration of which, Mr. Ballantine, from whose book* we are quoting, relates the following anecdote, as it was told him by an old gentleman still alive.

"This gentleman employed Roberts's father to make and mend his shoes, and on calling one day he found the side of the wall covered with representations of lions, tigers, &c., done with red keel and charcoal on the wall, so boldly and truly delineated that his attention and admiration were both excited, and he inquired of Mrs. Roberts who was the artist. 'Hoot,' said the honest woman, 'it's our laddie Davie; he's been up at the Mound seeing a wild-beast show, and he's caulked them there to let me see them.' 'And what are you going to do with the boy?' inquired my friend. 'I fancy,' said Mrs. Roberts, 'he'll just need to sit down on the stool aside his father there, and learn to mak' and mend shoon.' 'That will never do,' said my friend. 'Nature has made him an artist; he must be a painter.' I may add that the result of this and similar efforts on the part of the boy was that he was apprenticed to Beugo, a celebrated ornamental house-painter; and it is a curious coincidence, and evinces the kindness of the artist to his early friends, that in the last years of his life the daughter of his apprentice-master, and the person who communicated this story, were both partakers of his bounty."

At fourteen years of age, then, he was apprenticed to this Mr. Gavin Beugo, for two shillings a week wages for the first year, with a rise of sixpence weekly every succeeding year; and here, too, his treatment was somewhat of the harshest, the master being a passionate, fitful, and tyrannical man. But David weathered all his difficulties in time; practised drawing in after-hours; dodged the house-key when it was flung at his head; ground his colours diligently; frequented the Life Academy got up by Beugo's apprentices among themselves, and of which the most important member and model was a donkey; and in every way possible to him prepared himself for the coming struggle of life; getting no sympathy at home when he complained of his rough usage at the shop, but, on the contrary, being pretty well snubbed, and told to respect and obey his master whatever happened.

But it was not all rough usage and hard work in those apprentice-days. The association of three or four ambitious lads, each burning to become the future Raffaelle of his generation, brought about many a pleasant hour, of which those spent in the mutual adoration common to enthusiastic boys were not the least delightful. For are not the illusions of youth more delicious than any after-knowledge? When Roberts saw his first painting framed—the frame to cost two-and-sixpence, to be paid in weekly instalments of sixpence—he experienced more intense happiness, perhaps, than at any other practical evidence of success; and what a picture of boyish faith he gives us, when he speaks of his fellow-apprentices, Kidd and Mitchell—and of Mitchell's half-brother, the great John Dick, "who used to paint such subjects as Mary Queen of Scots escaping from Lochleven Castle, but was chiefly employed repairing and copying pictures for a dealer called Ander-

* Life of David Roberts.

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son, then considered the Woodburn of Edinburgh. Mitchell occasionally ground Dick's colours and set his palette, which invested him in our eyes with great dignity; and he used at the breakfast-hour to gather round him half a dozen of us, and excite our admiration and astonishment by taking out of his pocket, and exhibiting, little pictures in oil, which he had painted overnight." The best artist among them was William Kidd, who afterwards rose to some degree of eminence, but who was one of those unpractical men that never do any good for themselves or their families. His name often occurs in Roberts's diary, with much sad significance. "Poor William Kidd, five pounds." "William Kidd here with the old story—a distress put into his house, five pounds." At last comes, "Died, poor William Kidd." These were long years after the Life Academy established by Beugo's apprentice lads and a donkey, in Mary King's Close; at which time, indeed, "poor William Kidd" was the chief artist and leading member—looking down that golden vista of hope destined never to be traversed.

At last the seven years' apprenticeship came to an end, and young Davie was of age and his own master. After a short sojourn at Perth, in the employ of a house-decorator, he came back to Edinburgh just about the time when Mr. Bannister, the proprietor of the circus in North College-street, had resolved to add to the attractions of the ring, a stage, stage scenery, and a company of pantomimists. Roberts was out of employ, and a friend advised him to apply for the place of scene-painter to Mr. Bannister's new stage. He thought it presumptuous on his part, but his friend was resolute, and carried his point. In his diary, Roberts says that he could never forget the tremor he felt, the faintness that came over him, when he ascended to the second floor of 5, Nicholson-street, and, after much hesitation, at length mustered courage to pull the door-bell. Mr. Bannister received him very kindly, however, approved his drawings, and engaged him to paint a set of wings for a palace. The canvas was brought and laid down on the dining-room floor, and after the young man, only a journeyman house-painter as yet, had ground his colours, he began and completed his painting.

This was the beginning of his career as a scene-painter—at that time the highest object of his ambition; and at the close of the circus season he was engaged at a salary of twenty-five shillings a week to travel with the troupe into England, paint all scenery, &c., that might be required, and to make himself generally useful. The last clause translated itself into acting a barber in a pantomime, with other like parts to follow; wherein, he says, he rather over-did than under-did his business.

Thrown out of scene-painting by the ruin of Bannister, Roberts was forced to turn back to his old trade of house-painting, engaging himself first to Mr. Irvine, of Perth, as his foreman and chief hand, and then to Mr. Jackson, where he got forward with his art better than he had yet done. And then came another spell of his favourite scene-painting, and he was engaged by Mr. Corri, at the Edinburgh Pantheon, for the lordly honorarium of twenty-five shillings a week. Here he was much exercised by the chief scene-painter, a generally handy man capable of all things in a small way, who "was often so overpowered by fatigue that he was obliged to lie down and sleep, after indicating what he wished done, leaving the execution to me, although he very frequently gave the work what he called a few finishing touches—disgusting me by obliterating any artistic feeling there might have been." He got a better engagement soon after this, as scene-painter to the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, with thirty shillings a week salary. "This unexpected burst of good fortune was hailed by me with grateful enthusiasm," says David Roberts, the future R.A., when making his yearly thousands, "as I felt it would give me an opportunity to make my way onward as an artist." It was about this time that Andrew Wilson, master of the Trustees' Academy, where Roberts had permission to draw, made one of those wise and incisive remarks which tell on a young mind for life. Roberts thought he drew well in outline, and said so. "Ah," said Mr. Wilson, "in nature there are no outlines!" This is a companion anecdote to one related of Stanfield. "Stanny had shown his sketch-book to the veteran Nasmyth, and told him that he wished to form a style of his own. 'My young friend,' exclaimed the experienced artist, 'there is but one style an artist should endeavour to attain, and that is the style of nature. The nearer you get to her the better.'"

This scene-painting at the Glasgow Theatre was a great success, and got the young artist much local fame and many faithful friends and admirers. Among others, W. L. Leitch, who was engaged as scene-painter at the same theatre after him, and who says: "I then began to study the works of Roberts with deep interest, and found that, especially in architectural scenes, the simple beauty of his outline, combined with masses of light and shade, gave them a grand and most impressive effect; and it is impossible for me to say how much good I derived from their excellent teaching." Leitch's first introduction to Roberts was when, as apprentice to a house-painter who worked for Mason, he was sent with a pot of colour for Roberts at the theatre: finding him in the "pentin'-room at the vera tap o' the hoose," standing before a sheet of canvas as big as a mainsail, busy painting in some of the grand effects, which the lad, then just fourteen, felt as a revelation, and vainly tried to imitate. How far he succeeded in after-life, his reputation remains as the best proof. In 1820 Roberts went as scene-painter to the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, and this was the manner of his going:

"I started from Dumfries for Edinburgh one fine autumnal morning, minus many weeks' salary, and having little in my pocket, but with a heart buoyant with hope. My traps

were easily carried, and after walking twelve miles, I breakfasted at a cottage on the roadside, for which I paid a shilling. This lasted me all day; and after crossing the Moffat hills, a romantic and wild mountainous district, I reached, in the evening, a small inn called the Bield, thirty-six miles from Dumfries. Next morning I started very early, breakfasted at an inn called Noble House, and by mid-day reached Edinburgh, having walked seventy odd miles in a day and a half."

Here he made two friends of no ordinary stamp and no fleeting affection, James Ballantine, the author of the book from which we are quoting, who was engaged as his colour-boy in 1822, and Clarkson Stanfield, the young Irish sailor then lately injured in his feet by what the Queen called a "lucky tumble" from the mast-head, and engaged by Barrymore as scene-painter to the small Pantheon Theatre. They soon became fast and true friends, and Roberts was as much astonished and delighted at the scenery which Stanfield painted as was all the world beside. He made true use of this new friendship, profiting much by the works and conversation of the sailor painter; for Stanfield was before him in technical knowledge, having not only seen the best specimens of scene-painting in London, but knowing personally many of the leading artists of the day, while Roberts had fought his way alone, helped only by his own industry, courage, perseverance, and genius. It was at Stanfield's suggestion that Roberts began to paint small pictures for exhibition. The first that he sent was rejected, while those of his friend were the town's talk. However, he tried again, and the next year sent three to the Exhibition, finding, to his own naïvely expressed astonishment, that they were all hung, and that two of them were sold at fifty shillings each, the one to Baron Clerk-Rattray, and the other to James Stewart, of Dunearn. At this time he had forty shillings a week salary, out of which he paid half-a-crown to his colour boy; and this, together with chance windfalls when he painted an occasional picture or transparent window-blind, which he sold cheap, had put him so far before the world as to enable him to furnish a snug little house, and live in comfort, if not in luxury. When, therefore, he was advised to break up his home to try his fortune in London, he was in no wise inclined to follow the advice of his friend; but fortune, looking black enough at the time, turned him in spite of himself towards his better fate, and he was engaged by Elliston as scene-painter at Drury Lane—the engagement to last for three years, and the salary to be five guineas weekly for the first year, and six guineas for the last two years. Here he made one of a trio of which Stanfield and Marinari were the other members; but Marinari soon got distanced by the friends, and Roberts and Stanfield were generally associated in all the important new scenery. There was a fussy theatrical manager in those days, who used to spoil good work by meddling with the workers, but who could not afford to quarrel with his two famous scene-painters. Yet, to render assurance doubly sure, the friends concocted a kind of mutual comedy, persuading the manager that "each was of the most violent and indomitable temper, subject to fits of irrepressible rage that went to any length of destructiveness, and unrelenting if once aroused." Thus it came about that the fussy manager was frightened of his Frankensteins, and left them to work out their art undisturbed.

In 1824 Roberts exhibited, for the first time in London, at the British Institution, and also at the opening exhibition at the Suffolk-street Gallery. The picture at the British Institution was a view of Dryburgh Abbey, and afterwards engraved; and those at Suffolk-street were—one, the East Front, and the other the South Transept, of Melrose Abbey. They were bought by Sir Felix Booth for the sum of twenty-five guineas each—a large lump of money to the rising scene-painter at that time! Another picture—the West Front of Notre-Dame, Rouen—also purchased by Sir Felix Booth for eighty guineas, brought Roberts one of his best and most valuable friends in Lord Northwick, who wrote to him under cover to Stanfield, proposing that he should paint him one of the same size and subject, a little varied, and that Stanfield should paint a companion picture of the same size, both to be exhibited together next season. It was a highly characteristic letter, generous, thoughtful, and delicate; and when pay-time came, that crucial test of a man's real nature, the generous words translated themselves into corresponding deeds, and instead of the hundred and forty pounds asked, Lord Northwick gave the painter a cheque for two hundred, and won his heart for life.

In 1826, Roberts left Drury Lane, and went to Covent Garden at a salary of ten pounds a week for a working day of six hours; and from this time we find him painting pictures at ever-increasing prices—in the autumn of 1827 painting, with Stanfield, four pictures, each twenty-seven feet by thirty-eight, for which they received eight hundred pounds. It was a pleasant manner of showing their personal friendship and art-brotherliness. About this time Stanfield abandoned scene-painting altogether, save for kindly purposes and to assist private friends, as when he painted a scene for Not so Bad as We Seem, the play acted by authors and painters in aid of the funds for the Guild of Literature and Art; but we find him in 1827 painting a panorama with Roberts, of which, however, we hear no more.

Steadily rising, David Roberts next received a commission to paint the grand staircase at Stafford House; then was elected president of the Society of British Artists, Suffolk-street (1830); then helped in the creation of the Garrick Club; and then, in the October of 1832, set out on his famous Spanish journey. "I hope to leave in a fortnight from this date," he wrote to his friend Hay in September. "I owe no man in England a shilling. I have sufficient means to sustain me for twelve months. I am burning to retrieve the time I have lost,

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and am determined either to 'mak' a spoon or spoil a horn.' The first towns I stop at in Spain will be Burgos, Valladolid, Madrid, Toledo, and Cordova; thence I go to Seville, Cadiz, and Gibraltar; thence to Malaga and Granada, visit the Alhambra, then hey for merry England!"

This Spanish tour was the beginning of what we may call the painter's second term of prosperity. He wrote long, enthusiastic, interesting letters to his family and friends, and, after a year's good pilgrimage, returned home with a sketch-book rich in material for future fame and profit and noble art; painting pictures, publishing Picturesque Views in Spain, illustrating the Landscape Annual—always genial, generous, busy, and thriving.

In 1838, his Spanish studies being somewhat exhausted, he prepared to fulfil the cherished dream of his life, and to go out to the East. He had a mole on his leg, and a fortune-telling book, to which he used to pin his faith as a lad, assured him that this indicated he would be a great traveller. "After the wandering life I have led," he says simply, "I have sometimes thought that mole might have had something to do with it." However, whether due to the mole or not, he once more prepared to wander away, and on the 24th of September, 1838, found himself writing to his daughter Christine from Alexandria. He remained about eleven months; and when he came home, he painted some of the noblest pictures that he had yet done, and published his Holy Land.

After this he was fêted in Edinburgh, where he had been a mere house-painter, and had thought himself wonderfully blessed by fortune when he drew his salary of twenty-five shillings a week; and Lord Cockburn toasted him, and Christopher North praised him, and they sang a song, written for the occasion. Another time (1858), he and Stanfield — Stanny, as he always affectionately called him — visited Scotland together, and rambled about the places where they had often rambled before, when as yet poor and unknown, with only hope and the conscious power of genius to bear them on. Here was the burn paddled in when a wee callant; there the sign painted when the Eastern traveller was only an apprentice-boy, with that blessed mole on his leg! And then came a grand gala-day, when the freedom of the city was presented to Roberts in Edinburgh, and in the evening a dinner given to him and Stanfield by the members of the Royal Scottish Academy. And this time again a song, written for the occasion, was part of the honour of the evening.

It is not often that we see such a long, faithful, affectionate brotherhood as existed between these two men—a brotherhood never interrupted by anger, jealousy, misunderstanding, or any of those meaner passions which so often destroy the best affections. It lasted to the end, as fresh and warm as in the beginning, and "Stanny," and "Dear Stanfield," are frequent insertions in Roberts's later diary.

But the faithful friendship and the busy life were both drawing to a close. On the 25th of November, 1864, Roberts was seized with an apoplectic fit while walking in Berners-street, and died that same evening, aged sixty-eight; and on the 18th of May, 1867, Clarkson Stanfield was only a memory and a name, dying tranquilly in his home, aged seventy-three. The old friends were not long separated, and the generous rivalry which had begun in youth, and been continued through manhood up to age, was not exchanged for a long isolation. Life could never have been the same to either without his friend, and it was a merciful dispensation which took the one so soon after the other. Very little is said of Stanfield in this Life, but the close intimacy subsisting between them was well known to all their friends, and to the artist-world at large. And yet it would seem at first sight that there were more elements of disunion than of affection between them. Roberts was a Scotchman and a Presbyterian; Stanfield was Irish and a Roman Catholic; they had been rivals in Edinburgh; and their association in London as joint scene-painters to the same theatre would have been full of danger to men of less simple faith and less true artist-feeling. But nothing came between them; and, from first to last, "Davie and Stanny" were true brothers in art and in love.

THE LATE MISS HOLLINGFORD.

CHAPTER IV.

THE winter deepened. Christmas was drawing near, and workmen were busy setting the old hall to rights for the reception of Mr. Hill and his family. John had been requested to oversee the arrangements, for the place had been unoccupied for years, and there were many alterations to be made, and much new furnishing to be done. The housekeeper, who had quietly dozed away half her life in two rooms in a corner of the house, now bestirred herself joyfully to open shutters, kindle fires, see to the sweeping and scrubbing, keep her eye upon painters and charwomen, and make ready store of pickles and preserves for the adornment of her pantry shelves.

This good woman was an old acquaintance of our two girls, their long walks often leading them across the moor, and through the grounds to the hall. Mrs. Beatty, from her lonely window, had always espied their approach, and many a winter day had she dosed them with sweets by her fireside, while she dried their wet wrappings, and told them stories of the pictures in the dining-room. Later, they had discovered the library, a sunny room at the south side of the house, stored with an excellent collection of books, and had gone there to read when it pleased them. I, in my capacity of governess, encouraged them in this habit, and at least once a week we had a "reading day," as we called it. Mrs. Beatty knew our day, and had coffee and a blazing fire awaiting us. And here we had delicious times of study, with our books in our laps, perched on the steps of the little

ladder, or buried deep in the recesses of the deep leathern chairs.

Now, however, the luxury of our quiet days was interfered with. Workmen hammered about our ears, and an impertinent odour of paint annoyed us. We turned our reading days into days of general inspection, and amused ourselves with watching how the dingy corners threw off their cobwebs one after another, and came forth into the light with clean and brilliant faces. It was pleasant to know that I was useful to John in those days, for his mother did not interfere in this affair, and he needed a woman's taste to help him. It was I who selected the colours for Mrs. Hill's drawing-room carpet, I who chose the silk hangings for Miss Leonard's boudoir, I who rearranged in the cabinets the curiosities about which no one but a stray mouse or two had been curious for many years. I knew well that I did nothing but what any other person could do, yet it pleased me to see how John overrated my services. It pleased me to hear him describe to his mother my "exquisite taste and skill;" but it pained me to see her anxious look from him to me. I knew she feared that he was getting to like me too well; sometimes with a mixture of fear and joy I thought it myself. I guessed that his mother would rather keep her son by her side unwed—perhaps that he could not afford to marry. I often longed to slip my hand in hers, and say, "be not afraid, I am true;" but I could only look straight in her eyes and be silent. And this thought, perhaps because I might not speak it out and have done with it, remained with me, and preyed upon my mind. About this time I began to be awake at nights, planning how I might show Mrs. Hollingford that I had no wish to thrust myself between her and her son.

And so it came that there arose a strangeness between John and me. I did not wish it to be so, but it happened naturally as a consequence of all my thinking and planning. It grew up in the midst of our pleasant work at the hall, and it was troublesome, for it took the joyous adornment off everything, made handsome things ugly, and comfortable things dreary. It made the snowy landscape lonely, and the red sun angry. It made me cold and disobliging, the girls dull, and John proud and reserved. Jane spoke of it to me; she said:

"What is the matter between you and John? You used to be such good friends. Now you hurry down-stairs in the evenings, though you know he likes our chat round the school-room fire. And when we go to the hall you start early for the purpose of walking home without him."

"Don't be foolish, Jane," I said, "John and I are just as good friends as ever. But you must not suppose he always cares for our women's chatter. We must give him a little rest sometimes."

Jane was silenced, but not satisfied. She thought I was beginning to look down on her brother. The proud loving heart would not brook this, and she, too, estranged herself from me. The girl was very dear to me, and it was a trial.

Thus a division grew up amongst us. It was in the bright frosty days before Christmas, when the fields and dales were wrapped in snow, when the logs burned merrily, and the crickets sang, when fairyland was painted on every window-pane, when our superintendence at the hall was over, when all things there had been placed in readiness, even to the lighting of the fires in the bed-chambers. We had left Mrs. Beatty in possession of her domain, and in daily expectation of an announcement of the intended arrival of her master and mistress. Things were in this way when one day a carriage dashed up to our farm-house door, and out stepped Grace Tyrrell and her brother Frederick.

Jane shrank into a corner when I asked her to accompany me down-stairs, murmuring something I would not hear about my "fine friends." But Mopsie smoothed her curly locks, and put on her best apron, and slipped her hand in mine as I went down to the parlour.

Grace was impatiently tripping about the room, making faces at the bare walls and laughing at the old-fashioned furniture. She was clothed in velvet and fur, with feathers nodding from her hat. She put her hands on my shoulders and eyed me all over critically.

"Pray, little quakeress," said she, "can you tell me what has become of my friend Margery?"

"Yes," said I, laughing, "I actually happen to have her about me. What do you want with her?"

"Only to ask her what sin she has committed that she shuts herself up from the world, starves herself to skin and bone, and dresses herself in sack-cloth?" she replied, touching my dress, and trying its texture between her finger and thumb.

"We do not starve her," put in Mopsie, stoutly.

"And who are you, little miss?" said Grace, using a gold-rimmed eye-glass, which nearly annihilated poor Mopsie.

"No matter," said the little one, scarlet and trembling. "We are all Margery's friends, and we love her dearly."

Grace laughed at the child's ardour, as if it were something very funny and original; but Mopsie, never flinching, held my hand all the time.

"And what about the ploughman, dear?" Grace went on; "would it be possible to get a sight of him? Yes, do go" (to Mopsie), "like a useful little girl, and see about getting us some lunch. We are staying in this country at present, Margery, and when we return to London we intend to take you with us."

Mopsie's eyes dilated dangerously, but she retreated to the door at a whisper from me.

"Frederick," said Grace, "come and help me to persuade Margery." And Mopsie vanished.

I said something about Frederick Tyrrell before, but I can hardly describe how excessively slim, and elegant, and effeminate he looked to me that day in particular. His dress and his manners amused me very much. While staying with the Tyrrells one of my chief occupations had been making fun of this young man,

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a fact of which I believe he was blissfully unconscious. Perhaps experience had made him incredulous as to the indifference any young lady might feel to his special favour; or it might have been conceit; I will not pretend to decide which. But when he drew near me, murmuring (shall I say lisping?), "Oh, do come; pray také pity on us—we have missed you so dreadfully," I am sure he thought he did enough to make any reasonable young woman desire to leave Hillsbro' on the instant.

But I did not want to leave Hillsbro'. I felt a pang of keen pain at the very suggestion, yet at the same moment an idea came into my mind that it might be a good thing that I should leave it for a time. I hesitated, asked Grace when she intended returning to London, and, while we were parleying about the matter, Mopsie returned. During the remainder of the visit the little girl listened earnestly to everything we said on the subject, and when I parted from my friends at the gate, leaving it undecided whether I should go with them to London or not, Mopsie burst into tears and clung to my neck.

"Do not go with them," she said; "they cannot love you as we do."

"Mopsie, my pet," I said, "don't be a little goose. Neither do I love them as I love you. If I go away for a time I will be sure to come back."

Mopsie whispered her fears to Jane, and all that evening Jane kept aloof from me. My head ached with trying to think of what I ought to do, and I sat alone by the schoolroom hearth in the firelight considering my difficulties, fighting against my wishes, and endeavouring in vain to convince myself that I had no wishes at all. Mopsie came in and lay down at my feet, with her face rolled up in my gown; and so busy was I that I did not know she was crying. John came in and found her out. He took her on his knee and stroked her as if she had been a kitten. Mopsie would not be comforted. I felt guilty, and said nothing. John looked from her to me, wondering. At last Mopsie's news came out.

"Margery's grand London friends have been here, and they want to take her away."

"What grand London friends?" asked John, looking at me, but talking to her.

"Oh, Mr. and Miss Tyrrell, a pretty lady with long feathers and ringlets, and flounces on her dress, and a handsome gentleman who said they had missed Margery dreadfully. And Margery is thinking of going back to them."

John suddenly stopped stroking her, and sat quite still. I felt him looking at me earnestly, and at last I had to look up, which I did smiling, and saying, "I did not know Mopsie cared so much about me."

Then John kissed the little girl, and said, "Go down-stairs to Jane, dear. I have something particular to say to Margery."

I was completely taken by surprise. He closed the door upon Mopsie, and came back and reseated himself at the fire. He sat on one side of the fireplace, and I at the other, and the flames danced between us. He shaded his face with his hand, and looked across at me; and I watched intently a great tree falling in the depths of a burning forest among the embers.

"Is this true, Margery," said John, "that you are going to leave us, and return to London?"

"I am thinking of it," I said, pleasantly.

"I thought—I had hoped you were happy with us," he said.

"Yes," I said, "I have been very happy, but I think I want a little change."

How my heart ached with the effort of uttering that untruth! I knew that I wanted no change.

"I do not wonder at it," he said, after a pause. "We have made a slave of you. You are tired of it, and you are going away."

He said this bitterly and sorrowfully, shading his eyes still more with his hand.

"No, no," I said, "you must not say that. I never was so happy in my life as I have been here."

I spoke more eagerly than I meant to do, and my voice broke a little in spite of me. John left his seat and bent down beside me, so that he could see my face, which could not escape him.

"Margery," said he, "I have seen that you have made yourself happy, and I have been sometimes wild enough to hope that you would be content to spend your life amongst us. When you came first I feared to love you too well, but your sweet face and your sweet ways have been too much for me. It may be ungenerous in me to speak, seeing that I only have to offer you a true love, truer maybe than you will meet with in the gay world, a tarnished name, and a very humble home. I have debts to pay, and a soil to wash off my name; but still, Margery, will you be my wife? With your love nothing will be dark or difficult to me."

It was very hard. My heart was brimming over with a joyous reply to this appeal; but Mrs. Hollingford's uneasy face was vividly before my eyes all the time, and I could only say, distressedly, "It cannot be, John. It cannot, cannot be."

"Why?" he asked, almost sternly, and he rose up and stood above me. "Tell me that you cannot love me—tell me you would rather save yourself for more honour, more prosperity, and I will never trouble you again. Were I differently circumstanced I might plead, but I could not live to see you discontented, ashamed. Why can it not be, Margery?"

I clasped my hands in my lap, and tried to speak firmly. "For a reason that I cannot give to you, John. Let us be good friends."

"Friends!" he echoed, bitterly. "Well! I was wrong to think of my own happiness before your worldly advantage. Good-bye, Margery. I am going to London in the morning. Perhaps you may be gone before I come back."

And with this he abruptly walked out of the room. But afterwards I sat there an hour, wondering if what had passed so quickly were

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true, and I had really refused to be John Hollingford's wife.

After tea he left us early, saying he must start for Hillsbro' at four in the morning. Mopsie fell asleep, and Jane absorbed herself in her books. Mrs. Hollingford and I held some embroidery in our hands, but my fingers trembled so that the stitches went all wrong. Now and again, glancing up, I encountered long troubled looks from Mrs. Hollingford. She had seen that something was amiss between me and John, and I guessed that her mind was at work with fears. I could not bear it; I thought it was not fair after what I had done. For the first and last time I felt angry and impatient with the dear old lady. Would she herself, in her own young days, have sacrificed as much? Jane shut up her books at last, and carried Mopsie off with her to bed, and Mrs. Hollingford and I were left sitting facing one another.

"Mrs. Hollingford," I said, dropping my work with almost a sob, "don't look at me like that. I cannot bear it, and I do not deserve it."

What made me say it I cannot think. The moment before I spoke I had no intention of speaking. Mrs. Hollingford dropped her work in dismay.

"My love," she said, "what do you mean? I do not understand. What do my looks say that you cannot bear?"

"Oh, Mrs. Hollingford," I said, covering my burning cheeks with my hands, "you must know what I mean. You look at me, and look at me, and I see what is in your mind. How can I help it?"

"My dear," said she, "is it anything about John?"

"Yes," said I, desperately, "it is about John. You think I want to take him from you, and I do not, and I never will, and I have told him so. I am going away to London with my friends the Tyrrells, and I will never trouble you any more."

I was rather blind by this time, and I was not sure of what part of the room I was in; but Mrs. Hollingford had come to my side, and she put her arms round about me and fondled my head on her breast.

"My dear," she said, "and is this the secret that has made the trouble between us? I never thought that you wanted to take him from me; on the contrary, I feared that you might be too young to understand his worth. I dreaded sorrow and suffering for my son, nothing else."

My face was hidden in her motherly embrace. I could not speak for some moments, and I thought my heart had stopped beating. At last I whispered:

"Oh, Mrs. Hollingford, I have made a great mistake. Can it be that you really——"

"Will have you for a daughter?" she asked, smiling. "Gladly, thankfully, my darling, if it be for your happiness. But you must not decide hastily; there are great disadvantages which you must consider, and I, as your guardian and friend, must point them out to you. I must forget my son's interests in the faithful discharge of my trust. John has a cloud upon his name."

"Don't, don't!" I said, "if he had a hundred clouds upon his name it would be all the same to me."

"Then you love him well?" she said, tenderly, sighing and smiling at the same time.

"I think I do," I said; "but that is only a misfortune, for you know I have refused him."

"Well," she said, cheerfully, "perhaps it is for the best. You must go to London with your friends, and test your feeling by absence and the society of others. If you remain unattracted by those who are better placed in the world, I think John will try again, in spite of his pride. I know I should in his place," she said, lifting up my disturbed face, and looking in it with a half quizzical fondness.

I answered by throwing my arms round her neck in a long tearful embrace, and after that we sat long by the fireside talking the matter over. The consequence was, oddly enough, that I went up-stairs to bed feeling so extremely sober that, before I laid my head upon my pillow, I had begun to doubt whether I cared for John Hollingford at all. It was not that I shrank from what his mother had called the "sacrifices" I should make in becoming his wife. I never even thought of them. I had found too much happiness at Hillsbro' Farm to be able to realise their existence. But I had a superstition that I should feel very joyfully excited at all I had learned that evening; first, that John really loved me, and, secondly, that his mother was ready to take me to her heart. Yet I only felt sobered to the last degree, and exceedingly afraid of seeing John again. I heard him driving away from the door before daybreak, and I found myself hoping that he might not come back for a week.

The next day I found myself in the same mood. I felt so grave and quiet that I made up my mind that I could not have that wonderful love for John which I believed to be the duty of a wife. I thought I had better write to Grace, and arrange about going with her to London. Then I grew miserable at the thought of leaving the farm, and wished I had never seen it. For three days I tormented myself thus, and then there came a shock which brought me cruelly to my senses.

On the fourth day after John had left us, I was walking up and down the frosty avenue just as the evening was coming on. The sun was setting redly behind the brown wood, and blushing over the whitened fields and hedgerows. A man came up the avenue and pulled off his hat as he approached me. I recognised in him an Irish labourer whom I had seen working in the gardens at the hall.

"Beg pardon, miss!" said he, "but be you Miss Margery Dacre?"

"Yes, Pat," said I. "This is a fine evening, is it not? What do you want with me?"

"Oh then, a fine evenin' it is; glory be to God!" said Pat; "but all the same, Mrs. Beatty is mortial anxious for you to step over to

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the hall the soonest minute ye can, as she has somethin' very sarious to say to ye."

"Step over to the hall?" I exclaimed. "Do you know what o'clock it is, Pat?"

"Oh yis, miss!" said Pat; "it's three o'clock, an' the sun low, but niver fear; I'll walk behind ye ivery step o' the way, an' if as much as a hare winks at ye, he'll rue the day. Mrs. Beatty would ha' come over here to spake to ye, only for fear o' hersel' at the farm," said Pat, jerking his thumb in the direction of the house. "God keep sorrow from her door; but I'm feared there's throuble in the wind!"

I did not quite understand whether the threatened trouble was for Mrs. Beatty or Mrs. Hollingford. I guessed the latter, and thought immediately of the absent husband and father. I felt that I could not do better than obey the summons. Pat promised to wait for me at the gate, and I hastened into the house to prepare for my journey.

"I am going for a walk, Jane," I said, looking in at the school-room door. "Don't be surprised if I am not in before dark."

"But, Margery!" I heard her beginning, and did not wait to hear any more.

How I racked my brains during that walk to try and guess the cause of my sudden summons. The only thing I could think of was that Mr. Hollingford was in prison. I never fancied anything approaching to the truth.

Mrs. Beatty was anxiously watching at the door for my arrival. She had tea waiting for me, and began pulling off my bonnet and boots at her fireside. But her hands were shaking, and her eyes red and watering.

"Never mind me, Mrs. Beatty," I said, imploringly; "tell me what is the matter."

"Take a sup of tea first, my dear young lady," said she; "ill news is heard soon enough."

"I won't taste it," I said, pushing it away. "Tell me this instant!" I said, as a dim fear of the truth came across my brain.

"Well, my dear," she said, beginning to cry outright, "you see there has been a terrible smash of the coach from London. The horses fell crossing a bridge, and the coach was overturned into the river; and they do say every body was killed or drowned. And poor young Mr. Hollingford was in the coach; and, oh! that I should have to say it, he's met a cruel death. I sent for you, dear young lady, that you might break the news gently to his mother; for there's not a soul in the country side dare carry the story to her door, and they'll maybe be bringing home the bodies."

"Stop!" said I. "Mrs. Beatty—are you sure——"

And the next thing I knew was a sensation of coldness and wetness upon my face, and a smell of vinegar and wine, and a sound of murmuring and crying.

"Dear heart, dear heart! to think of her taking on so!" I heard the good woman saying, and I crept to my feet, and began tying on my bonnet in spite of her entreaties that I would lie still.

"No, no, I must get home!" I said, shuddering. "Some one else will come and tell her, and it will kill her. Let me go at once! Let me go!"

At the door in the frosty dusk Pat was waiting with a horse and gig.

"I was thinkin' ye'd be a bit staggered by the news, miss," he said, "an' I put the mare to this ould shandheradan. It's not very fit for a lady, bad manners to it! but it'll be bether nor the slippery roads undher yer feet."

I do not know how the drive passed. I remember saying once to Pat,

"Are they quite, quite sure that Mr. Hollingford was—was——"

"No indeed, miss," was the answer, "sorra sure at all. They do say he was in the coach, but no wan seen him dead, as far as I can hear tell."

I made the man set me down at the farm gate, and walked up the avenue just as the early moonlight was beginning to light up the frosty world. As I came near the door, I fancied I heard crying and wailing; but it was only Mopsie singing in the hall. Behind the parlour window I saw Jane stepping about briskly in the firelight, arranging the table for tea. All was quiet and peaceful as when I had left the place two hours before.

CHAPTER V.

The children followed me to my room, wondering where I could have been so late. I said I was tired, and begged them to leave me alone. Then I locked my door, and a solitary hour of anguish passed. The fever of uncertainty would not let me weep; I suffered without much sign, but in such a degree as I had never dreamed of before.

There was something so horrible that I had to realise and could not. John killed, cut away from all reach of our loving and helping. John hurt and dying away from his home, without one by to comfort him, without his mother's blessing, without a whisper to tell him that I had loved him and would mourn for him all my life! John vanished from the earth: lost to us for ever! Never to see him again till my eyes were worn dim, and my hair white; and then perhaps to be as far from him as ever! The sickly moonlight fell about me with a ghastly peace, and the horror of death froze at my heart.

Tea-hour arrived, and the girls came and knocked at the door. I said my head ached, would they bring me some tea to my bedside? and they went again, and I could groan aloud without fear of being heard. Then Mrs. Hollingford came to me, questioning me anxiously, and pressing my burning temples between her cool soft palms; and there I lay under her hands, crushed with my cruel secret. I could not tell it. Not that night. When the worst must be known it would be my place to help them all in their agony; and was I fit for such a task now? Besides, there was still a hope, and I clung to it with wild energy.

I pretended to sleep, and heard soft steps about the room, and quiet whispers, and I knew that three loving spirits were watching

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and gliding about. By-and-by they left me for the night, thinking I slept soundly. But I could not sleep, and I would not have slept if I could. When the clock struck five I wrapped myself in a cloak, and went out to roam about the avenue, just for a change. I was half afraid of the ghostly trees, so black against the snow, but I was more in terror of the melancholy corners of my own room, the solitary light, the dreary ashes in the grate. I walked down to the gate, and even ventured out on the road, hoping to see some wayfarer coming past who might be able to tell me something of the accident. The road lay white and inviting before me. I tried to consider how far it might be to the nearest wayside cottage, where I might possibly learn some news that might break the awful suspense. But my head was confused, and I suppose I did not calculate the distance rightly, for after I had walked a mile I could see no dwelling on before me. The morning was breaking now, and the world looked pallid and dreary. Suddenly my strength failed, I felt faint and dizzy, and sat down upon a heap of stones, drawing my cloak over my face. I remember how my thoughts became broken and confused, and my senses numb. I roused myself once or twice, and said that I would move on in a few moments, but I must rest for a little while longer. And so I remained, lost in a sort of stupid dream of trouble, I do not know how long, when the sudden touch of a hand on my shoulder made me start, and a voice said, "What is the matter with you, my poor woman?"

It was a man's voice—a familiar voice; my children, it was the voice of John Hollingford. With a wild cry I flung back the cloak from my face. "John!—John!" I cried, and grasped him by both hands. There he stood unhurt. "Oh, thank God!" I cried again, and burst into a fit of weeping, though not a tear had I shed all the while I had pictured him lying dead or dying. "I thought I never should have seen your face again except in the coffin!" I sobbed in my foolish joy, hardly knowing what I said.

"Margery!" he said, "am I in my senses? Is this all for me?"

"I cannot help it," I said. "I ought, but I cannot. Oh, how I have suffered. No one knows but me. I heard it last night, and I kept it till now, and it has nearly killed me."

"You are killing yourself sitting here in the cold," said John. "You are nearly frozen to death." He wrapped my cloak round me, and drew my arm through his.

"Who told you of the accident?" he said.

"Mrs. Beatty, last night," I answered.

"She might have kept her own counsel till to-day. Several poor fellows have been killed, but many escaped like myself, unhurt. And so you kept it from my mother, and you grieved for me. Margery, may I ask again that question I asked you the night before I went away? If it pains you, say nothing."

"You may, John," said I.

"And what will you answer?" said he.

"Anything you like," said I, with a want of dignity, which it shocked me to think about afterwards.

"And you do not want to go to London?" he asked.

"Not unless you turn me out of doors," I said.

"My own, true, brave darling!" he said. And so we became engaged there upon the snow.

How wonderfully the sun rose that morning. How we walked home through Paradise, forgetting that there was such a thing as suffering in the world. How the girls hugged me when they knew all. How Mrs. Hollingford smiled upon us. And how sweet the honey and rice-cakes tasted at breakfast. I could not attempt to describe it to you, my dears. It was arranged that, all things considered, we had better not be married for a year.

It is strange how some little simple scenes will remain printed on the memory, when others more important have faded away. I remember our gathering round the fire that evening, the curtains unclosed, the mild moonshine behind the window, the room half black shade and half red light, the dear faces beaming round. That evening I wrote my letter to Grace Tyrrell to say that I should not go to London. That evening, also, there came a letter from Mr. Hill to John, saying that he hoped to arrive at the hall on the morrow or next day. At tea we talked about Rachel Leonard. Thinking of her, the scene at the party came vividly back—the occasion on which I had defended Mr. Hollingford so hotly; and also my conversation with Grace Tyrrell on the subject in the carriage coming home. After musing a little while, I said:

"John, are you quite sure that you never met Miss Leonard when you were abroad?"

"Quite," said John, looking at me curiously. "Why do you ask me that question so often, Margery?"

"Have I asked it often?" I said, "I don't remember, but I fancied from her manner that she knew something about you."

"It is not likely," said John, "for I know nothing about her." And so this matter dropped.

CHAPTER VI.

JOHN made me promise to go out to meet him next morning on his return from his early walk across the farm. I remember so well how gladly I sprang from my bed that morning, how tedious my dressing seemed, and yet how I lingered over it at the last, anxious to make myself more pleasing in the eyes which I knew would be watching for me from the hill. I remember how in the tenderness of my joy, I opened my sash to feed the robins, and how gay and fair the world looked in its robe of white. I remember how I ran after a little beggar boy to give him sixpence, and how afterwards I went along the path through the fields singing aloud for mere happiness. And yet a little cloud

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had already risen out of the glories of the shining East, and was spreading and moving towards me.

John and I walked home together, side by side, and we talked the happiest talk that ever was written or spoken. The world was all radiant over our heads and under our feet, and we could not see even the shadow of the cloud that was coming, coming, fast as the wheels that were rolling, rolling, towards us from the distance.

"Look Margery," said John, "do you see a carriage on the road?"

I shaded my eyes with my hand, and I saw the carriage.

"I dare say it is the Hills'," I said, and then we walked on through the white fields and between the bare hedges till we came out upon the road which leads away across the moor, between Hillsbro' Farm and Hillsbro' Hall. There is a spot on this road which you know well, where the ground sinks into a hollow, and then rises in a steep abrupt hill, on the top of which any object suddenly appearing stands out in sharp relief against the sky, in the eyes of the traveller below. We reached the foot of this hill, John and I; we began to ascend; I raised my eyes, and saw a figure appear on the brink of the hill, a woman's figure with draperies fluttering a little as the petticoats of the market women flutter when they tramp the road to Hillsbro'. I raised my eyes again, and came face to face with Rachel Leonard.

She was walking quickly, pressing forward, wrapped in a fur mantle, with a Shetland snood drawn round her face. I remember the momentary expression of that face before it changed at sight of us; the delicate brows knitted as if in pain or anxiety; the wide dark eyes intent upon the scenes opening before them; the scarlet lips parted in fatigue; the glow of exercise wandering over the cheeks.

She did not see us at first; the sun was in her eyes; but I spoke her name aloud, and held out my hand. She started violently, and all the colour flew out of her cheeks. She took my hand, and held it mechanically, but her eyes were fixed on John. I looked at him in amazement, seeking for some explanation of the strange long look in her eyes, and the trembling of her white lips, only to see both repeated in his face, which had been ruddy and smiling the minute before. They stood gazing in one another's eyes as if both were magnetised, without either advancing a hand or attempting a word. An indescribable chill crept over my heart as I looked at them, and I drew my hand from John's arm, and turned impatiently away.

He did not seem conscious of the action, but it roused Rachel. She smiled, and extending her hand, said, with quivering lips, which she made vain efforts to compose:

"Mr. Hollingford, do you not remember me? My name is Rachel Leonard."

John's gaze had never left her face, and he could not but note the imploring look that came into her eyes as she said these words.

"Yes," he answered, and his voice shook, though his face kept a fixed, stern gravity. "Yes, surely I remember you—Miss Leonard."

At this the sound of wheels was heard coming up the hill, and with a sudden effort Rachel changed her manner.

"Here is the carriage," she said. "I hope, Mr. Hollingford, you will not greet Mr. and Mrs. Hill with that panic-stricken look. You are a great favourite with them, and they will be glad to see you. Pray do not look so shocked. They will think you have seen a ghost."

"Would to God I had—rather than have seen you," he murmured to himself, and I heard him.

The carriage drew up beside us, and Mr. Hill jumped out. He was an odd-looking man, with a bald, benevolent forehead, a pair of honest brown eyes, which glared about with a sort of fierce good humour, white hair, and white thick-set whiskers. Mrs. Hill sat within the carriage, a mild-looking fat little lady, with rosy cheeks and a piping voice, holding hugged in her arms something which looked like a bundle of fleecy wool, but which I afterwards knew to be a favourite dog.

"Eh, Hollingford, my lad, I am glad to see you. How are you? and your good mother?" said the old gentleman, grasping John's hand, and glaring kindly in his face.

"Well, Mr. Hill; well, thank you," answered John, but he kept his stern, absent demeanour, as if he could not, or would not, shake off the spell that had come over him, which made him look like a cold, unfaithful, unlifelike copy of himself.

The sharp trebles of the ladies' voices rang about my ears, but it was only by an effort that I could take in the meaning of what they said, so observant was I of John's severe glance which followed every movement of Rachel, as she stood chatting to me with a merriment which I could not but think was nervous and assumed.

Mr. Hill was rallying John upon his gravity, kindly and delicately, even in the midst of the natural noisy bluster of his manner. And somehow I divined readily, even out of the distraction of wonder that had come upon me, that the fine old gentleman, remembering certain thorns in John's way, was touched at seeing him proud and reserved in the presence of his natural equals, who had not sunk in the world's favour, and who had got no stain upon their name.

"Will you come and dine with us this evening at seven?" said Mr. Hill. "You and I must have much to talk about. I have been too long absent from this place, but even already I see new things around which delight me. I shall be blind and helpless here till you open my eyes and set me on my feet."

I noticed, or I fancied I noticed, that Rachel faltered on the words she was speaking at this moment, and that she held her breath to hear John's reply to the invitation.

"I will go with pleasure, sir," said John.

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"And Miss Dacre?" piped Mrs. Hill. "Will she not also come and dine with us?"

"I fear we should be bad company to-night," put in Rachel, quickly. "We shall be so tired; it would be a poor compliment to ask her to come and look at us nodding in our chairs. Say to-morrow, instead. Margery Dacre, will you come and spend a long day with us to-morrow?"

But Margery Dacre had at that moment no wish to spend such a day. I said, "No, thank you, Miss Leonard; I shall be otherwise engaged both to-day and to-morrow." And then, feeling that I had spoken very coldly, and seeing that she looked troubled, I added, forcing a smile, "The winter will be long enough for our civilities."

"But not for our friendship, I trust," she replied, quickly, seizing my hands, while her face cleared, and sincerity seemed to beam out of it, like the sun out of a May sky. I felt her fascination; but it sickened me somehow, and I dropped her hands, and thought of saying good morning to the group, and returning to the farm alone, so that John might not feel himself hindered from going to breakfast as well as to dine with these new old friends of his who were so eager for his company. But before I had time to act upon the thought Mr. Hill handed Rachel into the carriage, followed her himself, and the carriage rolled away. John and I were left standing there together; I, stupid, like one awakened from a dream, staring at the wheel-marks on the snow and at other signs which these people, in passing, had left behind them.

I turned and walked on silently towards the farm, and John walked beside me. A weight of doubt and wonder pressed on my heart like a load of ice. Why had John wanted to conceal from me his acquaintance with Rachel Leonard? Why had they both been so strangely moved at meeting? I longed to ask a question; but I could not find my voice. I longed for John to speak, and tell me something—anything at all that he liked; and were it the strangest puzzle that ever failed to be unriddled, I swore to my own heart that I would believe him.

"Margery," said John, speaking as if in answer to my thought—and he came nearer to me, for we had walked a little apart, and drew my hand through his arm, and looked down in my face—"Margery," he said, "look me straight in the eyes," and I looked, and saw them full of grievous trouble.

"You are blaming me in your heart," he said, "and saying to yourself that I have deceived you. Will you trust me that I did not mean to do so? I have got a cruel shock, dearest, and I beg of you to be kind and forbearing with me. I owe you an explanation, and I will give it the earliest moment I can. I cannot till I see further. In the meantime, I swear to you that there is nothing in this that should shake your faith in me. Do you trust me, Margery?"

"I would trust you against the whole world, John!" I cried, in a sudden remorse for having ever doubted him. And, smiling and happy, I walked by the side of his horse that evening down the avenue, and kissed my hand to him over the gate as he rode away to dine at the hall.

"Do not say anything to my mother about my knowing Miss Leonard," he said, the last thing at parting; and I nodded and said no, not unless he bade me; and I tried not to wonder, and went back to the house satisfied. And I was very merry all the evening; but at night, in my bed, I listened for his return. An evil spirit reminded me of Rachel's face when John said "I will go," and her quickness in arranging that I should not accompany him. I said, "Margery, I am ashamed of you; curiosity and jealousy are hateful; have nothing to do with them." And I turned on my pillow and prayed for John; and then I heard him coming into the house. So utterly still was everything by reason of the snow, that I heard his every movement. Even after he had closed his door, I thought I heard him walking about his room. And the wonder leaped up in me again—why was he troubled? why could he not rest? I got up, and laid my heart and ear against his door in a passion of dismay and sympathy. Up and down, up and down; no thought of sleep after his fatigue. Oh, what was this that had come between us? I went back to my bed and wept.

That was the first beginning of the trouble about Rachel Leonard. From that day a shadow hung upon John. He went often to the hall, for Mr. Hill fastened upon him, and delighted in him, and would not live without him. But the more he went to the hall, the more the trouble grew upon him; and I could not but date its beginning from the arrival of Rachel Leonard, seeing that, before he met her that morning upon the road, he had seemed as radiantly happy as it is possible for any man to be. And the more the trouble grew upon him, the more reserved he became on the subject of the people at the hall. His mother began to guess that he must be annoyed with business, and the girls to fancy that he and I had quarrelled. And I silently let them think that it was so, the better to keep his secret.

My own heart was aching, but I would not speak. I had promised not to doubt him, and I feared lest he should think, even by my face or manner, that I was weak enough to break my word.

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CHAPTER III.

Consideration for poor Lady Verinder forbade me even to hint that I had guessed the melancholy truth, before she opened her lips. I waited her pleasure in silence; and, having privately arranged to say a few sustaining words at the first convenient opportunity, felt prepared for any duty that could claim me, no matter how painful it might be.

"I have been seriously ill, Drusilla, for some time past," my aunt began. "And, strange to say, without knowing it myself."

I thought of the thousands on thousands of perishing human creatures who were all at that moment spiritually ill, without knowing it themselves. And I greatly feared that my poor aunt might be one of the number. "Yes, dear," I said, sadly. "Yes."

"I brought Rachel to London, as you know, for medical advice," she went on. "I thought it right to consult two doctors."

Two doctors! And, oh me (in Rachel's state), not one clergyman! "Yes, dear?" I said once more. "Yes?"

"One of the two medical men," proceeded my aunt, "was a stranger to me. The other had been an old friend of my husband's, and had always felt a sincere interest in me for my husband's sake. After prescribing for Rachel, he said he wished to speak to me privately in another room. I expected, of course, to receive some special directions for the management of my daughter's health. To my surprise, he took me gravely by the hand, and said, 'I have been looking at you, Lady Verinder, with a professional as well as a personal interest. You are, I am afraid, far more urgently in need of medical advice than your daughter.' He put some questions to me, which I was at first inclined to treat lightly enough, until I observed that my answers distressed him. It ended in his making an appointment to come and see me, accompanied by a medical friend, on the next day, at an hour when Rachel would not be at home. The result of that visit—most kindly and gently conveyed to me—satisfied both the physicians that there had been precious time lost, which could never be regained, and that my case had now passed beyond the reach of their art. For more than two years, I have been suffering under an insidious form of heart disease, which, without any symptoms to alarm me, has, by little and little, fatally broken me down. I may live for some months, or I may die before another day has passed over my head—the doctors cannot, and dare not, speak more positively than this. It would be vain to say, my dear, that I have not had some miserable moments since my real situation has been made known to me. But I am more resigned than I was, and I am doing my best to set my worldly affairs in order. My one great anxiety is that Rachel should be kept in ignorance of the truth. If she knew it, she would at once attribute my broken health to anxiety about the Diamond, and would reproach herself bitterly, poor child, for what is in no sense her fault. Both the doctors agree that the mischief began two, if not three, years since. I am sure you will keep my secret, Drusilla—for I am sure I see sincere sorrow and sympathy for me in your face."

Sorrow and sympathy! Oh, what Pagan emotions to expect from a Christian Englishwoman anchored firmly on her faith!

Little did my poor aunt imagine what a gush of devout thankfulness thrilled through me as she approached the close of her melancholy story. Here was a career of usefulness opened before me! Here was a beloved relative and perishing fellow-creature, on the eve of the great change, utterly unprepared; and led, providentially led, to reveal her situation to Me! How can I describe the joy with which I now remembered that the precious clerical friends on whom I could rely, were to be counted, not by ones or twos, but by tens and twenties! I took my aunt in my arms—my overflowing tenderness was not to be satisfied, *now*, with anything less than an embrace. "Oh!" I said to her, fervently, "the indescribable interest with which you inspire me! Oh! the good I mean to do you, dear, before we part!" After another word or two of earnest prefatory warning, I gave her her choice of three precious friends, all plying the work of mercy from morning to night in her own neighbourhood; all equally inexhaustible

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in exhortation; all affectionately ready to exercise their gifts at a word from *me.* Alas! the result was far from encouraging. Poor Lady Verinder looked puzzled and frightened, and met everything I could say to her with the purely worldly objection that she was not strong enough to face strangers. I yielded—for the moment only, of course. My large experience (as Reader and Visitor, under not less, first and last, than fourteen beloved clerical friends) informed me that this was another case for preparation by books. I possessed a little library of works, all suitable to the present emergency, all calculated to arouse, convince, prepare, enlighten, and fortify my aunt. "You will read, dear, won't you?" I said, in my most winning way. "You will read, if I bring you my own precious books? Turned down at all the right places, aunt. And marked in pencil where you are to stop and ask yourself, 'Does this apply to me'?" Even that simple appeal—so absolutely heathenising is the influence of the world—appeared to startle my aunt. She said, "I will do what I can, Drusilla, to please you," with a look of surprise, which was at once instructive and terrible to see. Not a moment was to be lost. The clock on the mantel-piece informed me that I had just time to hurry home, to provide myself with a first series of selected readings (say a dozen only), and to return in time to meet the lawyer, and witness Lady Verinder's Will. Promising faithfully to be back by five o'clock, I left the house on my errand of mercy.

When no interests but my own are involved, I am humbly content to get from place to place by the omnibus. Permit me to give an idea of my devotion to my aunt's interests by recording that, on this occasion, I committed the prodigality of taking a cab.

I drove home, selected and marked my first series of readings, and drove back to Montagu Square with a dozen works in a carpet-bag, the like of which, I firmly believe, are not to be found in the literature of any other country in Europe. I paid the cabman exactly his fare. He received it with an oath; upon which I instantly gave him a tract. If I had presented a pistol at his head, this abandoned wretch could hardly have exhibited greater consternation. He jumped up on his box, and, with profane exclamations of dismay, drove off furiously. Quite useless, I am happy to say! I sowed the good seed, in spite of him, by throwing a second tract in at the window of the cab.

The servant who answered the door—not the person with the cap-ribbons, to my great relief, but the footman—informed me that the doctor had called, and was still shut up with Lady Verinder. Mr. Bruff, the lawyer, had arrived a minute since, and was waiting in the library. I was shown into the library to wait too.

Mr. Bruff looked surprised to see me. He is the family solicitor, and we had met more than once, on previous occasions, under Lady Verinder's roof. A man, I grieve to say, grown old and grizzled in the service of the world. A man who, in his hours of business, was the chosen prophet of Law and Mammon; and who, in his hours of leisure, was equally capable of reading a novel and of tearing up a tract.

"Have you come to stay here, Miss Clack?" he asked, with a look at my carpet-bag.

To reveal the contents of my precious bag to such a person as this would have been simply to invite an outburst of profanity. I lowered myself to his own level, and mentioned my business in the house.

"My aunt has informed me that she is about to sign her Will," I answered. "She has been so good as to ask me to be one of the witnesses."

"Aye? aye? Well, Miss Clack, you will do. You are over twenty-one, and you have not the slightest pecuniary interest in Lady Verinder's Will."

Not the slightest pecuniary interest in Lady Verinder's Will. Oh, how thankful I felt when I heard that! If my aunt, possessed of thousands, had remembered poor Me, to whom five pounds is an object—if my name had appeared in the Will, with a little comforting legacy attached to it—my enemies might have doubted the motive which had loaded me with the choicest treasures of my library, and had drawn upon my failing resources for the prodigal expenses of a cab. Not the cruellest scoffer of them all could doubt now. Much better as it was! Oh, surely, surely, much better as it was!

I was aroused from these consoling reflections by the voice of Mr. Bruff. My meditative silence appeared to weigh upon the spirits of this worldling, and to force him, as it were, into talking to me against his own will.

"Well, Miss Clack, what's the last news in the charitable circles? How is your friend Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, after the mauling he got from the rogues in Northumberland-street? Egad! they're telling a pretty story about that charitable gentleman at my club!"

I had passed over the manner in which this person had remarked that I was more than twenty-one, and that I had no pecuniary interest in my aunt's Will. But the tone in which he alluded to dear Mr. Godfrey was too much for my forbearance. Feeling bound, after what had passed in my presence that afternoon, to assert the innocence of my admirable friend, whenever I found it called in question—I own to having also felt bound to include in the accomplishment of this righteous purpose, a stinging castigation in the case of Mr. Bruff.

"I live very much out of the world," I said; "and I don't possess the advantage, sir, of belonging to a club. But I happen to know the story to which you allude; and I also know that a viler falsehood than that story never was told."

"Yes, yes, Miss Clack—you believe in your friend. Natural enough. Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite won't find the world in general quite so

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easy to convince as a committee of charitable ladies. Appearances are dead against him. He was in the house when the Diamond was lost. And he was the first person in the house to go to London afterwards. Those are ugly circumstances, ma'am, viewed by the light of later events."

I ought, I know, to have set him right before he went any farther. I ought to have told him that he was speaking in ignorance of a testimony to Mr. Godfrey's innocence, offered by the only person who was undeniably competent to speak from a positive knowledge of the subject. Alas! the temptation to lead the lawyer artfully on to his own discomfiture was too much for me. I asked what he meant by "later events"—with an appearance of the utmost innocence.

"By later events, Miss Clack, I mean, events in which the Indians are concerned," proceeded Mr. Bruff, getting more and more superior to poor Me, the longer he went on. "What do the Indians do, the moment they are let out of the prison at Frizinghall? They go straight to London, and fix on Mr. Luker. What does Mr. Luker say, when he first applies to the magistrate for protection? He owns to suspecting a foreign workman in his establishment of collusion with the Indians. Can there be plainer moral evidence, so far, that the rogues had found an accomplice among the persons in Mr. Luker's employment, and that they knew the Moonstone to be in Mr. Luker's house? Very well. What follows? Mr. Luker feels alarmed (and with good reason) for the safety of the jewel which he has got in pledge. He lodges it privately (under a general description) in his bankers' strong-room. Wonderfully clever of him; but the Indians are just as clever on their side. They have their suspicions that the Diamond is being shifted from one place to another; and they hit on a singularly bold and complete way of clearing those suspicions up. Whom do they seize and search? Not Mr. Luker only—which would be intelligible enough—but Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite as well. Why? Mr. Ablewhite's explanation is, that they acted on blind suspicion, after seeing him accidentally speaking to Mr. Luker. Absurd! Half a dozen other people spoke to Mr. Luker that morning. Why were they not followed home too, and decoyed into the trap? No! no! The plain inference is, that Mr. Ablewhite had his private interest in the Moonstone as well as Mr. Luker, and that the Indians were so uncertain as to which of the two had the disposal of the jewel, that there was no alternative but to search them both. Public opinion says that, Miss Clack. And public opinion, on this occasion, is not easily refuted."

He said those last words, looking so wonderfully wise in his own worldly conceit, that I really (to my shame be it spoken) could not resist leading him on a little farther still, before I overwhelmed him with the truth.

"I don't presume to argue with a clever lawyer like you," I said. "But is it quite fair, sir, to Mr. Ablewhite to pass over the opinion of the famous London police-officer who investigated this case? Not the shadow of a suspicion rested on anybody but Miss Verinder, in the mind of Sergeant Cuff."

"Do you mean to tell me, Miss Clack, that you agree with the Sergeant?"

"I judge nobody, sir, and I offer no opinion."

"And I commit both those enormities, ma'am. I judge the Sergeant to have been utterly wrong; and I offer the opinion that, if he had known Rachel's character as I know it, he would have suspected everybody in the house, before he suspected *her*. I admit that she has her faults—she is secret, and self-willed; odd, and wild, and unlike other girls of her age. But true as steel, and high-minded and generous to a fault. If the plainest evidence in the world pointed one way, and if nothing but Rachel's word of honour pointed the other, I would take her word before the evidence, lawyer as I am! Strong language, Miss Clack; but I mean it."

"Would you object to illustrate your meaning, Mr. Bruff, so that I may be sure I understand it? Suppose you found Miss Verinder quite unaccountably interested in what has happened to Mr. Ablewhite and Mr. Luker? Suppose she asked the strangest questions about this dreadful scandal, and displayed the most ungovernable agitation when she found out the turn it was taking?"

"Suppose anything you please, Miss Clack, it wouldn't shake my belief in Rachel Verinder by a hair's-breadth."

"She is so absolutely to be relied on as that?"

"So absolutely to be relied on as that."

"Then permit me to inform you, Mr. Bruff, that Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite was in this house not two hours since, and that his entire innocence of all concern in the disappearance of the Moonstone was proclaimed by Miss Verinder herself, in the strongest language I ever heard used by a young lady in my life."

I enjoyed the triumph—the unholy triumph, I fear, I must admit—of seeing Mr. Bruff utterly confounded and overthrown by a few plain words from Me. He started to his feet, and stared at me in silence. I kept my seat, undisturbed, and related the whole scene exactly as it had occurred. "And what do you say about Mr. Ablewhite *now?*" I asked, with the utmost possible gentleness, as soon as I had done.

"If Rachel has testified to his innocence, Miss Clack, I don't scruple to say that I believe in his innocence as firmly as you do. I have been misled by appearances, like the rest of the world; and I will make the best atonement I can, by publicly contradicting the scandal which has assailed your friend wherever I meet with it. In the mean time, allow me to congratulate you on the masterly manner in which you have opened the full fire

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of your batteries on me at the moment when I least expected it. You would have done great things in my profession, ma'am, if you had happened to be a man."

With those words he turned away from me, and began walking irritably up and down the room.

I could see plainly that the new light I had thrown on the subject had greatly surprised and disturbed him. Certain expressions dropped from his lips as he became more and more absorbed in his own thoughts, which suggested to my mind the abominable view that he had hitherto taken of the mystery of the lost Moonstone. He had not scrupled to suspect dear Mr. Godfrey of the infamy of taking the Diamond, and to attribute Rachel's conduct to a generous resolution to conceal the crime. On Miss Verinder's own authority—a perfectly unassailable authority, as you are aware, in the estimation of Mr. Bruff—that explanation of the circumstances was now shown to be utterly wrong. The perplexity into which I had plunged this high legal authority was so overwhelming that he was quite unable to conceal it from notice. "What a case!" I heard him say to himself, stopping at the window in his walk, and drumming on the glass with his fingers. "It not only defies explanation, it's even beyond conjecture!"

There was nothing in those words which made any reply at all needful, on my part—and yet, I answered them! It seems hardly credible that I should not have been able to let Mr. Bruff alone, even now. It seems almost beyond mere mortal perversity that I should have discovered, in what he had just said, a new opportunity of making myself personally disagreeable to him. But—ah, my friends! nothing is beyond mortal perversity; and anything is credible when our fallen natures get the better of us!

"Pardon me for intruding on your reflections," I said to the unsuspecting Mr. Bruff. "But surely there is a conjecture to make which has not occurred to us yet?"

"Maybe, Miss Clack. I own I don't know what it is."

"Before I was so fortunate, sir, as to convince you of Mr. Ablewhite's innocence, you mentioned it as one of the reasons for suspecting him, that he was in the house at the time when the Diamond was lost. Permit me to remind you that Mr. Franklin Blake was also in the house at the time when the Diamond was lost."

The old worldling left the window, took a chair exactly opposite to mine, and looked at me steadily, with a hard and vicious smile.

"You are not so good a lawyer, Miss Clack," he remarked, in a meditative manner, "as I supposed. You don't know how to let well alone."

"I am afraid I fail to follow you, Mr. Bruff," I said, modestly.

"It won't do, Miss Clack—it really won't do a second time. Franklin Blake is a prime favourite of mine, as you are well aware. But that doesn't matter. I'll adopt your view, on this occasion, before you have time to turn round on me. You're quite right, ma'am. I have suspected Mr. Ablewhite, on grounds which abstractedly justify suspecting Mr. Blake too. Very good—let's suspect him together. It's quite in his character, we will say, to be capable of stealing the Moonstone. The only question is, whether it was his interest to do it."

"Mr. Franklin Blake's debts," I remarked, "are matters of family notoriety."

"And Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's debts have not arrived at that stage of development yet. Quite true. But there happen to be two difficulties in the way of your theory, Miss Clack. I manage Franklin Blake's affairs, and I beg to inform you that the vast majority of his creditors (knowing his father to be a rich man) are quite content to charge interest on their debts, and to wait for their money. There is the first difficulty—which is tough enough. You will find the second tougher still. I have it on the authority of Lady Verinder herself, that her daughter was ready to marry Franklin Blake, before that infernal Indian Diamond disappeared from the house. She had drawn him on and put him off again, with the coquetry of a young girl. But she had confessed to her mother that she loved cousin Franklin, and her mother had trusted cousin Franklin with the secret. So there he was, Miss Clack, with his creditors content to wait, and with the certain prospect before him of marrying an heiress. By all means consider him a scoundrel; but tell me, if you please, why he should steal the Moonstone?"

"The human heart is unsearchable," I said gently. "Who is to fathom it?"

"In other words, ma'am—though he hadn't the shadow of a reason for taking the Diamond—he might have taken it, nevertheless, through natural depravity. Very well. Say he did. Why the devil——?"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Bruff. If I hear the devil referred to in that manner, I must leave the room."

"I beg *your* pardon, Miss Clack—I'll be more careful in my choice of language for the future. All I meant to ask was this. Why—even supposing he did take the Diamond—should Franklin Blake make himself the most prominent person in the house, in trying to recover it? You may tell me he cunningly did that to divert suspicion from himself. I answer that he had no need to divert suspicion—because nobody suspected him. He first steals the Moonstone (without the slightest reason) through natural depravity; and he then acts a part, in relation to the loss of the jewel, which there is not the slightest necessity to act, and which leads to his mortally offending the young lady who would otherwise have married him. That is the monstrous proposition which you are driven to assert, if you attempt to associate the disappearance of the Moonstone with

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Franklin Blake. No, no, Miss Clack! After what has passed here to-day, between us two, the dead-lock, in this case, is complete. Rachel's own innocence is (as her mother knows, and as I know) beyond a doubt. Mr. Ablewhite's innocence is equally certain—or Rachel would never have testified to it. And Franklin Blake's innocence, as you have just seen, unanswerably asserts itself. On the one hand, we are morally certain of all these things. And, on the other hand, we are equally sure that somebody has brought the Moonstone to London, and that Mr. Luker, or his banker, is in private possession of it at this moment. What is the use of my experience, what is the use of any person's experience, in such a case as that? It baffles me; it baffles you; it baffles everybody."

No — not everybody. It had not baffled Sergeant Cuff. I was about to mention this, with all possible mildness, and with every necessary protest against being supposed to cast a slur upon Rachel—when the servant came in to say that the doctor had gone, and that my aunt was waiting to receive us.

This stopped the discussion. Mr. Bruff collected his papers, looking a little exhausted by the demands which our conversation had made on him. I took up my bag-full of precious publications, feeling as if I could have gone on talking for hours. We proceeded in silence to Lady Verinder's room.

Permit me to add here, before my narrative advances to other events, that I have not described what passed between the lawyer and me, without having a definite object in view. I am ordered to include in my contribution to the shocking story of the Moonstone a plain disclosure, not only of the turn which suspicion took, but even of the names of the persons on whom suspicion rested, at the time when the Indian Diamond was known to be in London. A report of my conversation in the library with Mr. Bruff appeared to me to be exactly what was wanted to answer this purpose—while, at the same time, it possessed the great moral advantage of rendering a sacrifice of sinful self-esteem essentially necessary on my part. I have been obliged to acknowledge that my fallen nature got the better of me. In making that humiliating confession, *I* get the better of my fallen nature. The moral balance is restored; the spiritual atmosphere feels clear once more. Dear friends, we may go on again.

CHAPTER IV.

The signing of the Will was a much shorter matter than I had anticipated. It was hurried over, to my thinking, in indecent haste. Samuel, the footman, was sent for to act as second witness—and the pen was put at once into my aunt's hand. I felt strongly urged to say a few appropriate words on this solemn occasion. But Mr. Bruff's manner convinced me that it was wisest to check the impulse while he was in the room. In less than two minutes it was all over—and Samuel (unbenefited by what I might have said) had gone down-stairs again.

Mr. Bruff folded up the Will, and then looked my way; apparently wondering whether I did, or did not, mean to leave him alone with my aunt. I had my mission of mercy to fulfil, and my bag of precious publications ready on my lap. He might as well have expected to move St. Paul's Cathedral by looking at it, as to move Me. There was one merit about him (due no doubt to his worldly training) which I have no wish to deny. He was quick at seeing things. I appeared to produce almost the same impression on him which I had produced on the cabman. *He* too uttered a profane expression, and withdrew in a violent hurry, and left me mistress of the field.

As soon as we were alone, my aunt reclined on the sofa, and then alluded, with some appearance of confusion, to the subject of her Will.

"I hope you won't think yourself neglected, Drusilla," she said. "I mean to *give* you your little legacy, my dear, with my own hand."

Here was a golden opportunity! I seized it on the spot. In other words, I instantly opened my bag, and took out the top publication. It proved to be an early edition—only the twenty-fifth—of the famous anonymous work (believed to be by precious Miss Bellows), entitled "The Serpent at Home." The design of the book—with which the worldly reader may not be acquainted—is to show how the Evil One lies in wait for us in all the most apparently innocent actions of our daily lives. The chapters best adapted to female perusal are, "Satan in the Hair Brush;" "Satan behind the Looking Glass;" "Satan under the Tea-Table;" "Satan out of the Window"—and many others.

"Give your attention, dear aunt, to this precious book — and you will give me all I ask." With those words, I handed it to her open, at a marked passage—one continuous burst of burning eloquence! Subject: Satan among the Sofa Cushions.

Poor Lady Verinder (reclining thoughtlessly on her own sofa cushions) glanced at the book, and handed it back to me looking more confused than ever.

"I'm afraid, Drusilla," she said, "I must wait till I am a little better, before I can read that. The doctor——"

The moment she mentioned the doctor's name, I knew what was coming. Over and over again, in my past experience among my perishing fellow-creatures, the members of the notoriously infidel profession of Medicine had stepped between me and my mission of mercy—on the miserable pretence that the patient wanted quiet, and that the disturbing influence of all others which they most dreaded, was the influence of Miss Clack and her Books. Precisely the same blinded materialism (working treacherously behind my back) now sought to rob me of the only right of property that my

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poverty could claim—my right of spiritual property in my perishing aunt.

"The doctor tells me," my poor misguided relative went on, "that I am not so well to-day. He forbids me to see any strangers; and he orders me, if I read at all, only to read the lightest and the most amusing books. 'Do nothing, Lady Verinder, to weary your head, or to quicken your pulse'—those were his last words, Drusilla, when he left me to-day."

There was no help for it but to yield again—for the moment only, as before. Any open assertion of the infinitely superior importance of such a ministry as mine, compared with the ministry of the medical man, would only have provoked the doctor to practise on the human weakness of his patient, and to threaten to throw up the case. Happily, there are more ways than one of sowing the good seed, and few persons are better versed in those ways than myself.

"You might feel stronger, dear, in an hour or two," I said. "Or you might wake, to-morrow morning, with a sense of something wanting, and even this unpretending volume might be able to supply it. You will let me leave the book, aunt? The doctor can hardly object to that!"

I slipped it under the sofa cushions, half in, half out, close by her handkerchief and smelling-bottle. Every time her hand searched for either of these, it would touch the book; and, sooner or later (who knows?), the book might touch *her*. After making this arrangement, I thought it wise to withdraw. "Let me leave you to repose, dear aunt; I will call again to-morrow." I looked accidentally towards the window as I said that. It was full of flowers, in boxes and pots. Lady Verinder was extravagantly fond of these perishable treasures, and had a habit of rising every now and then, and going to look at them and smell them. A new idea flashed across my mind. "Oh! may I take a flower?" I said—and got to the window, unsuspected, in that way. Instead of taking away a flower, I added one, in the shape of another book from my bag, which I left, to surprise my aunt, among the geraniums and roses. The happy thought followed, "Why not do the same for her, poor dear, in every other room that she enters?" I immediately said good-bye; and, crossing the hall, slipped into the library. Samuel, coming up to let me out, and supposing I had gone, went down-stairs again. On the library table I noticed two of the "amusing books" which the infidel doctor had recommended. I instantly covered them from sight with two of my own precious publications. In the breakfast-room I found my aunt's favourite canary singing in his cage. She was always in the habit of feeding the bird herself. Some groundsel was strewed on a table which stood immediately under the cage. I put a book among the groundsel. In the drawing-room I found more cheering opportunities of emptying my bag. My aunt's favourite musical pieces were on the piano. I slipped in two more books among the music. I disposed of another in the back drawing-room, under some unfinished embroidery, which I knew to be of Lady Verinder's working. A third little room opened out of the back drawing-room, from which it was shut off by curtains instead of a door. My aunt's plain old-fashioned fan was on the chimney-piece. I opened my ninth book at a very special passage, and put the fan in as a marker, to keep the place. The question then came, whether I should go higher still, and try the bedroom floor—at the risk, undoubtedly, of being insulted, if the person with the cap-ribbons happened to be in the upper regions of the house, and to find me out. But, oh, what of that? It is a poor Christian that is afraid of being insulted. I went up-stairs, prepared to bear anything. All was silent and solitary—it was the servants' tea-time, I suppose. My aunt's room was in front. The miniature of my late dear uncle, Sir John, hung on the wall opposite the bed. It seemed to smile at me; it seemed to say, "Drusilla! deposit a book." There were tables on either side of my aunt's bed. She was a bad sleeper, and wanted, or thought she wanted, many things at night. I put a book near the matches on one side, and a book under the box of chocolate drops on the other. Whether she wanted a light, or whether she wanted a drop, there was a precious publication to meet her eye, or to meet her hand, and to say with silent eloquence, in either case, "Come, try me! try me!" But one book was now left at the bottom of my bag, and but one apartment was still unexplored—the bath-room, which opened out of the bedroom. I peeped in; and the holy inner voice that never deceives, whispered to me, "You have met her, Drusilla, everywhere else; meet her at the bath, and the work is done." I observed a dressing-gown thrown across a chair. It had a pocket in it, and in that pocket I put my last book. Can words express my exquisite sense of duty done, when I had slipped out of the house, unsuspected by any of them, and when I found myself in the street with my empty bag under my arm? Oh, my worldly friends, pursuing the phantom, Pleasure, through the guilty mazes of Dissipation, how easy it is to be happy, if you will only be good!

When I folded up my things that night—when I reflected on the *true* riches which I had scattered with such a lavish hand, from top to bottom of the house of my wealthy aunt—I declare I felt as free from all anxiety as if I had been a child again. I was so light-hearted that I sang a verse of the Evening Hymn. I was so light-hearted that I fell asleep before I could sing another. Quite like a child again! quite like a child again!

So I passed that blissful night. On rising the next morning, how young I felt! I might add, how young I looked, if I were capable of dwelling on the concerns of my own perishable body. But I am not capable—and I add nothing.

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Towards luncheon-time—not for the sake of the creature-comforts, but for the certainty of finding dear aunt—I put on my bonnet to go to Montagu Square. Just as I was ready, the maid at the lodgings in which I then lived looked in at the door, and said, "Lady Verinder's servant, to see Miss Clack."

AMONG RUSSIAN PEASANTRY.

The chief personage in a Russian household is the Dvornik, or porter, who is usually a sort of superintendent-general of the establishment. He has no particular duty himself; but nothing can be done with or about the house without his sanction and approval. He is, in many respects, independent of his employer, and treats him habitually with rather a distant kind of courtesy, as if he belonged to a class whose characters were peculiarly open to suspicion. It is not surprising that he should take this somewhat distorted and unusual view of life, for he is a member of the only profession recognised in Russia which is not, in some degree, a sham and a delusion. A Dvornik is entrusted with real responsibilities, which he would find it extremely inconvenient and painful to neglect. He is under the direct control and superintendence of the police. He is bound to see that the street in front of his house is not blocked up or encumbered so as to impede the local traffic. The observance of various sanitary regulations are committed to him. He is bound to give immediate notice in case of fire, or anything wrong with the sewers, the gas, or the water of the house in his keeping. He must scatter sand or ashes over the pavement when it is rendered slippery by the frost; and he must sweep away the snow as it falls, to prevent accumulations. If he disobeys any of these injunctions he is requested to have an interview with the nearest policeman in authority, and he is mulcted without mercy, and often severely beaten. In consequence of the peculiar position which they occupy the Dvorniks have become a very noticeable body of men. It is said that they are all in the pay of the secret police, and that they supply evidence which now and then sends a person suspected of advanced political opinions to Siberia; but then any Russian will do that, gentle or simple, with pay or without pay; so that the Dvorniks must not be judged harshly merely for sharing the degradation of the rest of their countrymen after so many generations of despotism and abuse of power. Apart, therefore, from the trifling national incident in their biographies that they are all spies, the Dvorniks may be considered as a highly respectable community. They are generally men of amazing strength, and many of them are extremely handsome. The Russian who is born in some of the central provinces of the empire is a very different man to the Calmuck or the Tartar; and the expression of his countenance is much more frank and pleasant. He is apt to have a long golden-coloured beard, a straight nose, and clear blue eyes, well opened. His complexion is fresh and healthy, and his constitution extraordinarily hardy. Cold and heat seem to have no effect on him whatever. His sole remedy for sickness is to go and bake himself in a hot-air bath for an hour or two, and then take a roll in the snow, or plunge into cold water. The diet upon which he supports his massive and powerful frame is wonderfully frugal. He eats a prodigious quantity of black bread, but rarely takes anything else besides a water-melon and a few onions, or some hot cabbage-water. As long as he can manage to keep from drink he is a faithful, prudent, well-behaved fellow; but drunkenness being the only enjoyment of which he has any knowledge or appreciation, he can seldom resist an opportunity of indulgence. The best thing his employer can then do is to take no notice, and the Dvornik will probably retire to some hole among the firewood or the coals, only known to himself, and there sleep off his debauch.

The power of work in these men, when sober, is perfectly marvellous, and fully compensates for the holidays they take when overcome by tipsiness. Thus, a man who has been overlooking the discharge of wood-waggons from sunrise to sunset, will begin immediately afterwards to see that lumps of tallow of the requisite size are placed in the right number of lamps for any of the numerous illuminations ordered by the police on public occasions. He will attend to the orderly arrival and departure of carriages, if his employer chances to give a ball; and he will be ready in the smallest hours of the morning to open the great gates for the guests, and then to stand watchful and alert over other wood-waggons next day, besides performing his ordinary work. The pay he gets for all this is ridiculously small. Dvorniks will often be found ready to give their services only for shelter for themselves and their families. It is not altogether even a bad speculation for them to do so. Russian houses are very large, and lodgings in them are usually let in flats or sections of flats; so that, owing to this arrangement, the same house has frequently a considerable number of tenants. Now, as these tenants daily require some little service from the Dvornik, it is natural that they should be ready to oblige him in turn; and, as he has the rare quality of trustworthiness, he contrives to turn it to good account by obtaining supplementary employment for his family among the lodgers. Thus, his wife is frequently a washerwoman, his daughters ladies'-maids, and his sons, if not pressed for the army, contrive to make a very good living out of occasional jobs about the house; or one is coachman, another butler, and a third valet. Perhaps the highest wages received by a Dvornik, exclusive of such perquisites are about thirty shillings a month. Small as this sum seems to us in England, it is sufficient for all the usual wants of a Russian emancipated serf. The Dvornik seldom or never quits the premises he governs; he wears the

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same colourless durable clothing all the year round, and has no amusements whatever which cost money. Indeed, it is very observable that the largest establishments of the most ostentatious Russians do not as a rule maintain splendid menials. On great occasions of state and ceremony, indeed, they thrust everybody they can catch into fine liveries, and very funny they look in plush and profuse embroideries; but generally a nobleman may have a hundred servants, all equally ragged and disreputable. Directly the grand occasion, whatever it may be, has passed, the fine liveries are all taken off, and frequently forgotten for a generation in some lumber-room. Meanwhile everybody about the place dresses in such motley garments as they may have chanced to pick up.

Next in importance to the Dvornik comes the coachman of a Russian household. He is usually chosen for his fatness and the length of his beard. These seem curious reasons for choosing a coachman in a country where coach-boxes are smaller than anywhere else in the world; but whereas the average breadth of a Russian coach-box is scarcely more than twelve inches at the outside, the average breadth of a Russian coachman is a very different affair. None but Dutchmen of the most orthodox proportions can be compared with them in majesty of aspect when viewed from behind. Their general rotundity is something quite admirable; and as they are clothed in long cloth gowns reaching from their beards to their heels, they appear to be of nearly the same size all the way down, like enormous animated polonies of a blue colour. They are not, however, of precisely the same size, owing to a curious practice which they have of covering the back part of their gowns below the waist with pipes like those of an organ, filled with horsehair, which act like the roughings or projections made in a horse-shoe for frosty weather, and enable them to sit securely on their little coach-boxes, and take a firm grip of them by the ridges artificially made in their garment especially for that purpose. Servants were always so plentiful in Russia, previous to the emancipation of the serfs, that their duties came to be subdivided in a manner unknown in countries where labour is free to command its fair value in wages. The overgrown and disorderly establishment of a Boyard costs him really far more than the few well-trained and busy servants who are found sufficient for all the reasonable wants of the most opulent families in civilised countries; but as there was no visible outlay of money to pay the horde of half-dressed and useless people who prowled about houses in Russia, they were multiplied infinitely. No landowner ever seemed to consider that by maintaining a number of lazy people in idleness at his house, he took away an equal number of stout arms from reproductive labour in a thinly inhabited country, and that it was partly from this cause that so many of his fields remained untilled. The spirit of sober calculation and forethought is of all mental qualities that which is most wanted in Russia, and most seldom found.

A coachman in his way is as much a despot as the Dvornik. As long as he does not transgress any of the sanitary regulations under control of the latter, he is supreme over the coach-house and stabling. The value of the property thus entrusted to him is very large; and drunkenness is so very general a quality among Russian servants that the few coachmen who will either consent to remain permanently sober, or who may be relied upon only to get drunk at certain fixed periods, stipulated and understood beforehand—such as the principal festivals and Saints' days of the Church, Sundays, and generally when there is anything particular for them to do—such treasures command almost any wages they like to ask. Their demands are as exorbitant as those of accomplished French cooks, and they are quite as wayward and capricious. They expect everything to be done for them, and even to be lifted upon the coach-box by obsequious underlings. Once there, they will consent to drive; and they drive at such a pace and in such a manner that the soundest horses are usually crippled in a few days by their treatment. Indeed, a Russian gentleman's horse, free from blemishes, caused by brutal over-driving and rough treatment, is never seen. The coachman being lifted on his box and fixed securely between the ridges in the skirt of his gown, seizes one of the reins in each fat, clumsy, awkward, hand. The ends of these reins are usually covered with red or yellow silk to give him a firmer grip of them. He commences his business by crawling along at a footpace, till he hears some carriage behind him, and then it becomes his main object in life not to allow that carriage to get in front. Those who have lived in Russia will perfectly understand the practical value of these efforts. When roads are a foot deep in dust during the summer, and in slush during the winter, it is a doleful method of performing a journey, to do so behind another carriage. The immense cloud raised by a pair of horses and four wheels, will darken the air on the sunniest day like a thick fog, extending for fifty yards on all sides of them. No sooner, therefore, does the coachman hear the sound of distant wheels than he pricks up his ears and gathers his reins. Then he calculates the distance between him and the carriage behind with painstaking accuracy, slackening his own pace to quite a crawl. The enemy, or hinder carriage and its occupants, deceived by these appearances, probably make a rush to get past, and come up at a furious pace for that purpose. But just as they get within dust range, the torpid mass in front shoots off like a steam-engine. A few deep curses, a blinding cloud shutting out the sun, moon, and stars, and all nature from them, and behold they are converted into so many millers, with respect to their personal appearance. Then begins a misery long drawn out, which quite puts an end to all the pleasure of their ride.

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If they pull up to let the carriage ahead of them have a fair start, no sooner has the dust-cloud subsided, or been blown away, than they observe that the accursed thing, having utterly discomfited them, has pulled up also, and there it is creeping along the road as before. The moment they quicken their pace the same tactics are resumed as on the former occasion; and whereas the party in front are enjoying all the delights of a summer afternoon in a commodious equipage; those behind feel all the time as if they were floundering about in a dust-bin. A pair of first-class Orloff trotters in the hands of an experienced coachman will keep the road in this way against all comers; and hence both man and horses command an extraordinary price, every comfort and luxury derived from carriage exercise depending upon them. A fleet trotter will often fetch as much as eight hundred guineas, and his value is so largely increased if a suitable match can be found, that a pair of unusual excellence have been sold for twenty thousand roubles, or three thousand pounds; a much higher price than can be obtained for the finest carriage horses in England. It is moreover a well known fact that one coachman can get very much greater speed than another out of the same horses. The method of driving them more resembles the American than the English manner. The Orloff trotter is a large, heavy, clumsy beast, which requires to be pulled together, and which leans heavily against the bit when trotting. The tighter the reins are pulled, the faster he goes, and slackens his pace directly they are loosened. The coachman usually takes a short punishing whip from under him, and flogs his cattle without stint or measure at starting. Then he lets them go and holds on to his reins for dear life. The pace of some of these trotters under the treatment mentioned, excels anything recorded of English horses. The tremendous rate of even twenty miles an hour has been repeatedly surpassed. But then these horses seldom go any distance.

They are kept for weeks in hot stables, and fattened like pigs. They are never taken out for exercise, and seldom appear, except at races or on parade occasions, for more than an hour at a time. Russian coachmen have a curious habit of watering them before they go to work; but it does not seem to interfere with their speed or endurance, although a disease never seen in other countries appears to seize upon them if watered shortly after their return to the stable. A horse to which water has been incautiously given too soon after work is said to be "burnt," and is subsequently taken with an inexplicable illness beyond the reach of any known remedy. In a few days he begins to droop, and shows all the usual symptoms of internal mischief of the gravest character. Frequently he goes on from bad to worse, till glandular swellings ensue; these are followed by ulcers breaking out everywhere, and at last the animal dies in great torture. Sometimes the disease takes a different direction. The horse does not die, but he withers away. He loses strength and flesh. His appetite becomes feeble and capricious. His crest sinks. His coat grows rough and staring, and he is never fit for steady work any more. A horse burnt in this way is often purchased, even by experienced buyers, for one merely out of condition. But care and food are quite lost upon the poor creature. A single draught of water after one of those wild rushes along the hard dusty road—and the poor beast seems smitten with incurable weakness for the rest of its life.

As Russian coachmen are chosen for their fat persons and long beards, so Russian horses are often selected, where mere beauty is held worthy of consideration, for their size and the length of their tails. A Russian sledge well put together is the most picturesque equipage in the world. The horses are stallions, of immense size, with high crests, long manes, and tails that sweep the ground. Their harness is particularly elegant and pretty, leaving the noble muscular frame of the animal unencumbered and completely exposed. The horses look like those painted in Wouverman's pictures, perfect models of strength and courage.

Carriages are a much more essential part of a Russian than of an English establishment. It is not quite orthodox for a Russian magnate to be seen on foot at all; and the immense fur cloak or pelisse which he is obliged by the rigour of his climate to wear for at least two-thirds of the year is little adapted for the freedom or even security of motion necessary for commodious pedestrian exercise. A boisterous north wind blowing against a knock-kneed gentleman of dissipated habits, wrapped up in a bear-skin, and perched upon high-heeled boots, is an adversary it requires some courage to face; and not all the shifts and stratagems of the knock-kneed gentleman, such as turning his flank to the enemy, and keeping as much as possible under shelter of streets and buildings, will prevent his being knocked over now and then when incautiously turning the corner of a street. The process is very simple, and almost invariably the same. The wind strikes its victim and spins him round. In a moment his legs become embarrassed in the skirts of his pelisse, and in the next the long cape of it is blown over his head and blinds him. He looks so pitiable an object in this position that experience warns him to beware of exposing himself to such ignominy. And it thus happens that he lays out most of his cash and credit in the purchase of nearly every description of vehicle by which he may be spared the use of his legs. An Englishman of very moderate fortune, who proposed to settle in Russia, and desired to take a house upon lease, spoke to a native gentleman upon the subject. "I have a house at your disposal," said the Boyard, with that ready kindness of manner which is so charming

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a feature of Russian society; "but I fear you could not live in it, for there is only room in the coach-house for five carriages."

THE LESSER LIGHT.

The "lesser light" that "rules the night"—otherwise the moon—has been much and unjustly calumniated. The faults of others have been laid on her shoulders. In many cases she has been set down as the guilty party, when she merely signalised the presence of evil. Moon-blindness, moon-strokes, and sundry other misfortunes, are no more attributable to the moon than they are to you. A moon-calf only would believe it. The sole fault of moonwort (although old women use it as a love-potion) is, that, as a fern, Botrychium Lunaria, it is neither common nor easy to cultivate. In short, the moon is a victim of popular prejudice. It is time that somebody should stand up for the moon.

But the proprietorship or protectorate of the moon is disputed. Amongst French savants, M. Delaunay accuses M. Le Verrier of considering the moon as his own private property; nobody but himself has a right to touch or meddle with it. M. Le Verrier tells M. Delaunay that he knows nothing about the moon, and had better let her be quiet; which, as a matter of course, he declines to do. We admire M. Delaunay's spirit, being obliged to him for great part of the contents of this paper.

No one can put his head out of doors on a bright shiny night without acknowledging the presence of a remarkable heavenly body. When the moon is

> Riding near her highest noon,
> Like one that had been led astray
> Through the Heav'ns' wide pathless way,
> And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
> Stooping through a fleecy cloud,

it must be an apathetic gaze which does not admire her splendour. An intelligent Zulu, commenting on the "two great lights—the lesser light to rule the night"—of Genesis, has observed that the moon, though called a great luminary, has no light of her own, but only shines with what she receives from the sun. But light, whether direct or reflected, *is* light: and if we had only direct light to guide us, we should more frequently than not be wandering in darkness. It would be ungrateful on our part to deny that the moon, although a less generous benefactor than the sun, still bestows a very useful illumination—not to mention her preventing the sea from becoming stagnant.

If you had never seen the moon before, we should be tempted to tell you that from her successive positions and diverse appearances we learn that she is not very far distant from us; that she moves round the earth, describing in twenty-seven days and a third a nearly circular orbit, whose radius is equal to sixty times the radius of the terrestrial globe—i.e. if the earth were a ball two miles in diameter, the moon would be sixty miles away; and that her various aspects or *phases* are solely due to her place with respect to the sun, who illumines her. The moon, while travelling round the earth, accompanies us in our annual movement round the sun. She is only a satellite of the earth—quite a small attendant. The earth is forty-nine times as big as the moon. The earth's annual movement round the sun is also performed in an almost circular orbit, but its dimensions are quite on a different scale to the moon's. The distance the earth maintains from the sun is (as nearly as we know at present) about four hundred times as great as our distance from the moon, or twenty-four thousand times the length of the earth's radius.

The earth and her satellite form only a portion of the solar system; that is, of the assemblage of bodies composed of the sun in the centre and a certain number of planets revolving round it at greater or less distances, in the same direction and almost in the same plane. The earth is one of this family of planets. The attendance of a satellite dancing round her while she dances round the sun, is far from being an exceptional circumstance. Jupiter has four satellites; Saturn eight, without counting the singular appendage which encircles him as a ring, or rings; Uranus six; and Neptune one. Amongst the principal planets, there are only Mercury, Venus, and Mars who have laid down the rule, "No followers allowed."

On casting a bird's eye view over the whole solar system, it will appear that the moon is a very small affair. But everything, not only in this world, but in the universe, is relative; the child thinks as much of his toy as the adult of his race-horse or his railway shares. For us, dwellers on earth, the moon is specially important, because she is the *nearest* heavenly body. If we are inclined to travel into space, to fathom its depths and see what we can find there, it is the moon which affords us the very first stepping-stone on our grand voyage of discovery. Her close neighbourhood allows us to investigate the details of her form and movements; she is the first to initiate us into the mechanism of the heavens. By the apparent rapidity of her course compared with that of other stars, she gives rise to diverse phenomena which have helped us to solve grave and difficult problems.

For instance, the moon may fairly claim to share with the apple the honour of having led to the discovery of gravitation. Weight, which makes bodies fall to the ground, is not confined to the surface of the earth. It exists on the top of the tallest edifices, at the summits of the loftiest mountains, without showing any appreciable sign of growing weaker. It brings back the stick of the most high-flying rocket; it draws down hail, rain, and snow, from the upper regions of the atmosphere. "If weight," thought Newton, "has caused this apple to fall to the ground, why should not weight reach as far as the moon? Why should not the moon have the same tendency as the apple has to fall

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to the ground? And is not this tendency the actual cause which, like an invisible string, retains the moon in her orbit round the earth?" How fully Newton answered the question will be told immediately.

Galileo, studying the motion of bodies falling to the ground, discovered that weight invariably produces on them the same effects in the same time, whatever be their condition of repose or movement. In the case of a body projected in any direction, weight causes it to descend from the position it would occupy at any moment in consequence solely of its velocity, by precisely the distance it would have fallen during the same interval of time, if simply allowed to drop.

A cannon-ball shot out horizontally would, *if it had no weight*, continue to move forward in a straight line for an indefinite distance; but in consequence of its weight, it gradually sinks below the level of its original direction; and the distance through which it sinks below the straight line which, without weight, would have been its course, is precisely the distance through which it would have fallen if allowed to drop from its starting-point without receiving any impulse.

These very clear and simple principles apply directly to the case of the moon. At every instant of her course round the earth, she may be compared to a cannon-ball shot out horizontally. Instead of moving in a straight line indefinitely forward, she declines from it little by little to approach the earth, thus describing an arc, or portion, of her almost circular orbit. She is consequently every instant falling towards the earth; and the space through which she falls in a given time can be calculated, as with the cannon-ball. Newton, therefore, was able to estimate how far the moon falls towards the earth in a second of time.* By comparing the result thus obtained with the distance through which bodies fall in a second of time at the surface of the earth, he thought to find out whether those two similar effects are to be attributed to one and the same cause.

But a grave consideration here arises. Although observations made on the tops of buildings and the summits of mountains indicated no slackening of the speed of falling bodies, that is, no diminution of the intensity of weight, it was probable that at distances like that which separates the moon from the earth, the force of weight might diminish with the increase of distance. But what was the law of this diminution? It was necessary to discover it, in order to ascertain whether the incessant dragging down of the moon towards the earth is due to the very same force of weight whose effects we are constantly witnessing around us. The consequences of the conclusion thus reached, were enormous.

Newton rightly thought that if it is the *weight* of the moon which compels her to move in the almost circular orbit which she describes round the earth, the planets also ought to be drawn to the sun by weight analogous to that which draws the moon towards the earth; so that the weight of one body towards another more or less distant from it, would assume an universal character.

Now, Kepler, comparing amongst themselves the movements of the different planets round the sun, had discovered that the squares of the times of revolution are proportional to the cubes of their mean distances from the sun. It is possible, moreover, to calculate for each of the planets (as already indicated for the moon) the distance which it falls towards the sun in a second of time. Following that course and keeping Kepler's law in mind, Newton ascertained that the weight urging the planets towards the sun, diminishes its intensity in proportion as their distance increases; that it becomes four times, nine times, sixteen times smaller, when a planet's distance from the sun is twice, three times, and four times greater; in other words, that the weight urging a planet towards the sun varies inversely as the square of the planet's distance from the central luminary.

Applying this result to the earth, Newton calculated that if the cause which makes the moon revolve in a nearly circular orbit round the earth be identical with the force of weight which makes bodies near the earth's surface fall to the ground, the intensity of this cause at the distance of the moon (sixty times the length of the earth's radius) ought to be three thousand six hundred times weaker (the square of sixty) than it is at the surface of the earth. Since, therefore, bodies at the surface of the earth traverse a certain number of feet during the first second of their fall, the moon during every second of her course ought to fall a distance three thousand six hundred times less—that is, about the twentieth of an inch.

It now remained to *calculate* the distance the moon actually does fall towards the earth in a second of time, in order to see whether this quantity be really the twentieth of an inch. Newton knew that the radius of the moon's orbit is sixty times as long as the radius of the earth, but at the date when he endeavoured to compare weight at the surface of the earth with the force which keeps the moon in her orbit, the radius of the terrestrial globe was not ascertained with sufficient exactness. The result did not completely answer his expectations; he made the distance fallen through by the moon in a second to be a little less than the twentieth of an inch. But, although the difference was so small, he thought it sufficient to prevent his concluding that the two forces were identical. Fortunately the cause which checked his progress was removed shortly afterwards.

This memorable attempt to establish the

* M. Delaunay teaches us *how* to calculate the distance through which the moon falls in a second. The reader will probably be content with the result, which may perhaps surprise him by its smallness, being no more than one millimètre and a third—not the tenth of an inch.

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identity of terrestrial weight with the force which retains the moon in her orbit was made in 1666. Newton, who was born on the 25th of December, 1642, was then, therefore, three-and-twenty years of age. Later (in 1670), Picard, one of the first and most illustrious members of the French Académie des Sciences (founded also in 1666), undertook a new measurement of the earth's dimensions, which sensibly altered the value of the terrestrial radius. About the middle of 1682, at a meeting of the Royal Society of London, Newton heard speak of Picard's new measurement, and of the care with which it had been executed. He obtained the fresh result arrived at, and as soon as he got home, resuming the calculation he had essayed sixteen years ago, he tried to work it out again with his corrected data. As he went on, and the favourable tendency of the amended figures became apparent, his agitation was such that he could not continue it, but begged one of his friends to finish it for him. Its success was complete. It was no longer possible to doubt that the same force which brings an apple to the ground also prevents the moon from parting company with us.

Newton was, therefore, authorised to assert that the planets are drawn by weight, or gravitate, towards the sun, exactly as the satellites are drawn by weight, or gravitate, towards the planets to which they belong; and that the weight of bodies on the surface of the earth is only a particular case of the gravitation manifested in celestial space by the revolution of the planets round the sun and of the satellites round their respective planets.

How natural, then, to generalise the idea by stating that all material bodies dispersed in space are impelled by weight, or gravitate, towards each other, in obedience to the magnificient law which is known in science as universal attraction or gravitation, first revealed through the vagaries of the changeful moon!

THE ENGLISH GENTLEMAN'S OWN PROFESSION.

The belief, once extant, that no person with a claim to be regarded as nobly born, could possibly follow any other profession than that of arms has got to be effectually exploded. Yet still there lingers in the minds of all sorts of people a tacit conviction that the military profession more than others is an aristocratic one, and that to be known to belong to it is a sort of proof of being a person of some consideration. The tradesman who has made money will put his son into a crack cavalry corps, and will pay the prodigious bills which are the inevitable result of this step, comforted by the thought that his son is an "officer and a gentleman." The mother and sisters of this officer and gentleman are proud of his social position as they would not be if he were in some other line of business, and when the neighbours make enquiry after the lad, reply that he is "with his regiment" with much internal satisfaction. This feeling of reverence for the position of an officer in the army is indeed very widely diffused among English people. By many members of the lower classes, especially, it is considered complimentary to credit you with the possession of a commission in her Majesty's service. In Leech's caricatures, his favourite little snob is taken by the cunning crossing-sweeper and the Hansom cabman for an officer, and is gratified accordingly. The crossing-sweeper would never pretend to take the little gent for a doctor or a civil engineer by way of flattering him. He professes to connect the miserable fool whom he intends to fleece with the army because it is supposed to be a profession peculiar to the higher classes, and so he conveys by implication his conviction that this his victim is of the higher classes too.

It is a common argument with that large class of persons who see danger in every effort which we make to advance, that one of the greatest advantages belonging to our purchase system is, that it keeps our army supplied with officers who are above all things, and par excellence, gentlemen. Now, assuming for the moment that this particular element, in the character of the men whose business it is to work the war machinery of the country, is as important an ingredient as so many of these obstructive individuals believe it to be, we come next to the question: does the purchase system secure this object of officering our army with gentlemen so entirely and so certainly, as to make it for the sake of that consideration alone, a desirable thing to retain?

If we take the trouble of taxing our memories a little, still more if we take the additional trouble of looking back through a file of old newspapers, the chances are that we shall come upon many instances of behaviour on the part of English officers, sometimes acting individually, sometimes collectively, which it is not easy to reconcile with the rules by which gentlemen should be guided in their dealings with each other. We light upon many cases, in the course of such a scrutiny, which—though we should not be surprised to hear of them in a company of ordinary human beings—we *are* surprised to encounter among the members of so exclusively aristocratic a race as the officers of the British army are considered to be. We come, for instance, upon cases of peculation and cheating, if so vulgar an expression may be allowed, such as that of a gallant captain forging a bill for nine hundred and fifty pounds wherewith to pay a previously contracted debt; or another gallant captain tried by court-martial for having "fraudulently applied" a sum of twenty-one thousand nine hundred and fifty-three rupees, received by him as paymaster of his regiment. We come also upon cases—not a few of these—of quartermasters found guilty of "conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman," in making private profit out of stores of wood, oil, beef, coals, &c., ostensibly supplied to the regiment which they represented; or in re-

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ceiving gratuities from purveyors of forage or other stores; or even administering bribes to obtain the support of witnesses who could assist them with valuable false evidence. We note, moreover, instances of shady transactions with accommodation bills, or what looks rather like sharp practice in connexion with the sale of commissions. A gentleman whose name has not been down for purchase, *and who has been passed over several times,* suddenly takes advantage of his seniority to declare himself for purchase, on finding that a certain commission, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have been worth four thousand five hundred pounds, was to be had for the regulation price of one thousand eight hundred pounds, because the holder of such commission had been forced to resign on account of some act which had rendered him unpopular in his regiment.

And what other inconsistencies do we note in the conduct of these models who are so continually held up before our eyes as patterns of what gentlemen should be? We actually find that on some occasions they fall under the influence of intoxicating liquors. We read of a certain lieutenant, quartered in India, who, by way of cooling his blood, gets so drunk that he goes to a place of public entertainment, where there are ladies, whom he insults grossly, getting into all sorts of personal altercations with their protectors; and of another in such a state of complicated drunkenness that he is brought before a court-martial for being actually too much intoxicated to appear at a court of inquiry into his own conduct. These are not isolated cases, and there are others on record of idiotic and disgraceful conduct which make us almost hope that the perpetrators may have had the excuse of being "in liquor" when they acted so contemptibly. Can one do otherwise than hope that men are drunk when they go into a mosque at Cairo and disturb the congregation, showing their wit by addressing the priest with the inquiry, "How are you, old fellow?" and finally falling to work at breaking the lamps outside till they succeed in getting up what they call "a row"? Or this other party of officers, on whom a court of inquiry is held to investigate a charge brought against them of getting into a church at Kurrachee, and ringing the bells, and burlesquing the Litany at midnight—can we wish that they should prove to have been sober, and in possession of their right senses at the time of doing such things? This tendency to get into "rows" when quartered in foreign stations seems to be developed rather strongly among our junior officers (and gentlemen), as witness those disturbances which took place not long since at Malta and Valetta, and which, beginning with an altercation between some officers of the 100th Regiment and a Maltese shopkeeper, ended in serious riots, in which several policemen, hindered in the performance of their duty, received black eyes, and were otherwise maltreated.

But besides such cases as these, or that of the gallant officers in the Guards, who (this in our own country) pretended to be highwaymen, and robbed one of their own comrades in fun—in addition to cases of this sort, which perhaps savour as much of mere folly and imbecility as of any more dangerous quality—we meet with a certain proportion of instances of conduct which cannot be attributed to simple idiotcy, but which show a spice of the ruffianly element as well; as when we find a certain lieutenant tried by court-martial and convicted for having, apparently in a mere ebullition of foul temper, ordered his sergeant-major in one case, and one of the engine-drivers on the East Indian railway in another, to be made prisoners, handcuffed, and leg-ironed for no offence, as the court decided, whatever; or when we discover another officer (and gentleman), a cornet this time, assaulting and kicking a mess-waiter for very slightly misunderstanding an order which had been given him. But this last instance of eccentric behaviour deserves to be treated of a little more at length.

In a well-known Indian newspaper, called the Bangalore Herald, it is chronicled that on a certain day in the year 1865, one Cornet W. ordered dinner in the mess-room for himself and two friends, and that soon after this small party had sat down to their meal, the chinniah (mess-waiter) was told by Cornet W. to *call* the butler. The chinniah, slightly misunderstanding the order, goes out of the room and *fetches* the butler; whereupon our cornet furiously inquires, "What did I say to you?" And when the unfortunate waiter, confounding the words "call" and "fetch," replies that he had called the butler as desired, Cornet W. swears at him in the most furious manner, gives him a severe kick in the back, and throws a loaf of bread at him. The bewildered native, staring a little, as well he might, after experiencing this treatment, manages, as it appears, to give further offence by so doing. At all events, we find our irritable cornet demanding "why he" (the chinniah) "stares at him," and then administering two or three more kicks, with a view of correcting him of so bad a habit, and a blow in the side into the bargain. The chinniah, under all this provocation, does not utter a sound, but the next day goes and complains before a magistrate, when the cornet pleads guilty to the kicking, but shelters himself under extenuating circumstances (the provocation he had received), and is only fined twenty rupees, no part of which, the magistrate takes care to specify, is to go to the wretched chinniah, on account of his impertinent conduct (in staring?) after receiving the kicks!

A pretty strong case this, the reader will admit, against Cornet W.; but we have not done with him yet. It appears that the editor of the Bangalore Herald, moved to indignation by the base treatment of the miserable chinniah, produced an "editorial" on the subject, in which Cornet W. was spoken of as a "bumptious young cornet," and otherwise somewhat

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roughly dealt with. Off goes the "bumptious young cornet" to the office, inquires for the editor, and on his appearing calls him "a d—d blackguard," knocks him down, and then falls upon him with a horse-whip, which he had brought with him with a view to hostilities. Twice he assaults the helpless editor in his prostrate condition, and then retires to a carriage, in which three of his brother-officers are waiting, to congratulate him, doubtless, on his spirited behaviour.

It is to be hoped that we do not number many youths of the Cornet W. type among the "gentlemen" by whom our army is so fortunate as to be officered. The cornet's small esteem for the feelings, bodily or mental, of a native are, however, by no means to be regarded as exceptional. The writer has now before him an account of a still more outrageous instance of such brutish indifference than that just quoted. This present case is, indeed, one of those in which it is difficult to bring oneself to believe—nothing less, in fact, than the case of a young officer (a lieutenant this time) making use of the living body of his native servant as a target for the trial of certain experiments in gunnery practice in which he was engaged. But the story deserves to be told thoroughly. It is too good—or too bad—for curtailment.

At a court-martial at Agra on the 24th of April, 1862, Lieutenant G., of her Majesty's Bengal Infantry, was arraigned on a charge of "feloniously, unlawfully, and maliciously shooting at one Meer Khan with a gun loaded with gunpowder and a bullet of hard clay or earth, with the intent then, and there, and thereby, to do him some grievous bodily harm." This gentleman was found guilty by the court, and sentenced to three months' imprisonment, but, strange to say, recommended to the merciful consideration of the commander-in-chief, because, "although the facts averred in the charge did occur, the court is of opinion that but little criminality attaches itself to the prisoner, who, they fully believe, was only guilty of error of judgment and of boyish folly." To this the commander-in-chief makes a very proper reply, furnishing, at the same time, some particulars in connexion with the case which are rather calculated to startle the stay-at-home Englishman who is not fully acquainted with the uses to which "natives" are sometimes put by "officers and gentlemen" in India. The remarks of his excellency are to the following purpose:

"The commander-in-chief is unable to accede to the recommendation of the court, the sentence being already too lenient. It is shown by the evidence that Lieutenant G., in despite of the remonstrances of his servants, and by threats of maltreatment, compelled Meer Khan to sit down, covered with a quilt, whilst he fired at him. The excuse set up, that this was done merely to ascertain whether a ball of hard dry clay would penetrate the quilt or be broken against it, cannot be listened to, for it was quite unnecessary in making such an experiment for his own amusement to peril the life of a human being. One shot broke, but the second wounded the servant in the leg, and laid him up for a time. If the shot had struck Meer Khan in the eye or temple, it might have deprived him of sight, or proved fatal. The commander-in-chief is quite at a loss to understand how the court can excuse such a premeditated and selfish outrage on humanity as a 'boyish folly.' His excellency cannot believe that if the act had been committed on any friend or relation of any member of the court they would have come to the same conclusion. The prisoner had some time before been punished by the magistrate for having discharged a loaded pistol at a policeman; a fact which renders still more untenable the excuse of 'boyish folly.'"

Now, what are we to expect of the future career of a young gentleman such as this? That he will prove a credit to his profession, and be likely to turn out a valuable officer in after-life? Yet this is the kind of personage who, according to our present system, may in the natural course of events, and if he happens to be possessed of money enough to buy his way up, have the safety and welfare of British troops—your troops, fellow-householder, and mine—entrusted to his care.

Let us now turn from these instances of mere dull barbarism to one or two specimens of persecution of what may be called a less material character. Distinctly or indistinctly, most of us have some sort of recollection of the Robertson court-martial and of what was familiarly called the "Dawkins row," two celebrated causes, which had at least this one element in common, that both Captain Robertson and Lieutenant-Colonel Dawkins were men who had managed to become vastly unpopular in their respective regiments, and against each of whom a very determined attempt was made to force him to retire. Their unpopularity, however, arose from different causes.

There seems no reason to doubt, and this is the most curious feature of the Robertson case, that if this gentleman and Colonel Dickson, had fought a duel, the captain might have held his position in the regiment entirely unmolested. But no duel having taken place after Colonel Dickson had in the hall of his club called Robertson a liar and a coward, shaken his fist at him, and promised to horsewhip him "in front of his regiment," and no apology being obtainable from the colonel, the unfortunate captain was pronounced by those whom it concerned to have been wanting in spirit, and was treated accordingly.

It is a very difficult thing in these days to come out of a personal altercation with flying colours, and certainly Captain Robertson did not succeed in doing so. He demanded apologies of his adversary, it is true, in a variety of ways. He even on one occasion sent a friend to demand a hostile meeting—though one sees this part of the business only dimly, through a veil or mist of some density. At all events no meeting came off, no apology was made, Colo-

nel Dickson remained unpunished, and then the whole matter came to the ears of the colonel of Captain Robertson's regiment, and from that time this ill-starred personage had no peace of his life.

The details of this case are still fresh in the public memory. The reader of newspapers remembers what a bitter time Captain Robertson had of it; how he was sent to Coventry by his brother-officers; how a large section of them (almost all in fact) sent him a round robin requesting him to retire; the colonel himself being active in promoting the signature of this document — insomuch that one officer, more merciful than the rest, who had declined three times to sign, on being told that the colonel wished it, gave in at once, and signed "under protest"—how all sorts of small indignities and annoyances were heaped upon him; the aid of his subaltern withdrawn when the regiment was on the march; his leave of absence stopped without sufficient reason; an order given, when he was not on duty, that he should attend both morning and evening stables; a refusal sent to his request that his complaints of ill-treatment might be forwarded to the proper authorities; a junior officer invested by the colonel, in Robertson's presence, with the temporary command of the regiment during the colonel's absence—the command properly devolving on Robertson as the senior captain then in barracks. The annoyances seem, however, to have reached their culminating point when one day Captain Robertson—an officer of sixteen years' standing—was required to exercise in the riding-school *with a backboard on;* a thing which the riding-master of the regiment said was almost without precedent in the case of an officer, he remembering but one instance of such a thing, the instance of a subaltern only fifteen months in the service.

This pressure was altogether, it must be owned, rather sharp and strong, and, upon the whole, we are none of us surprised to find that one day when the deputy-something, Colonel Brownrigg, got the unfortunate Robertson into his office—Colonel Bentinck, his own colonel, being present too—and told him that he must either send in his resignation or submit to a court-martial on his behaviour at the time of the altercation at the Army and Navy Club with Colonel Dickson—we are not surprised, I repeat, to find him—he having only a quarter of an hour given him to decide in, though he pleaded hard for more—yielding at last to antagonistic circumstances and consenting to send in his resignation. Still less are we surprised to find him shortly afterwards recalling the same, and stating that he had only forwarded it to the Horse Guards "under intimidation." It was that last statement which brought about the court-martial, in the course of which so much curious matter was dragged into the light.

Now, it is not unlikely that Captain Robertson may have had his faults—indeed, the impression left on the reader's mind by some of the evidence which came out on the trial is that he had. It is not unlikely that he may have been unpopular in his regiment, though it must be owned that such unpopularity seems to have dated from the time of Colonel Bentinck's assuming the command; but supposing that he was unpopular, supposing even that there were reasons why it was desirable that he should be got to retire, was this reiteration of small persecutions and vexations the proper way in which to bring the thing about, or was such a course of proceeding characterised by that straightforwardness and love of fair play which one expects to find the rule of action in a society of gentlemen?

And yet this system of small persecutions does seem to be the approved method, according to present ideas, of inducing an officer to send in his resignation when he is disliked in his corps. We were speaking but now of Colonel Dawkins and his case, as somewhat analogous to the case of Captain Robertson. And, indeed, in many respects it seems to be so; both these officers having been unpopular in their regiments, and both regarded with an especial dislike by their respective commanding officers. The chief difference between the two cases seems to have consisted in the number of enemies which each of the officers managed to make in his corps; Robertson having every man's hand against him, while Dawkins had only to contend with some three or four of the officers of his regiment. These, however, were a host in themselves, and were, with the exception of an adjutant, who managed to inflict a great variety of annoyances on Colonel Dawkins, high in office. They seem with one accord to have fixed on his temper as the cause of his unfitness to remain in the regiment, or at any rate to advance to a position of authority in it. Lord Rokeby, commanding the regiment, accuses Dawkins at a certain interview of having such an ungovernable temper that he (Lord R.) should have great hesitation in recommending him for a higher position—a reprimand which seems to have given rise to a serious quarrel between the two; Lord Rokeby shortly afterwards offering his hand to Dawkins, and receiving in return only a military salute, for which behaviour to his superior Colonel Dawkins was put under arrest for eleven days.

As in Captain Robertson's case, so also in this of Colonel Dawkins, all sorts of old charges are raked up to tell against him, such as that once in Bulgaria, in the year 1854—the inquiry at which this evidence was adduced taking place in 1865—*he had pitched his tent in front of that of another officer*. Nor are the small annoyances wanting; as when the officer, who has the arranging of the invitations to a Queen's ball, writes to ask him if he wishes to go, and then as he did not happen to be at home at the moment when the proposal came, fills up his place without waiting for the answer, which arrives only a few hours later.

But it is with Colonel Newton, who commanded Dawkins's division, or was in some

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other way in a position of authority over him, that he seems oftenest to have come into collision. He accuses this officer of inflicting humiliation upon him in many ways, and especially on one occasion when, D. having been absent from muster, Colonel Newton loudly and roughly reprimanded him before a junior officer, saying "that others should not suffer because he chose to run riot;" that "he would make him parade so many times a day," with other insults, all spoken in so loud a tone of voice that the non-commissioned officers and others in the outer room could hear him distinctly. This Colonel Newton does indeed seem to have pursued his junior with a most venomous and insatiable hatred, for we find him some time subsequently, and after he had actually left the regiment, going out on a certain field-day to Wormwood Scrubbs, riding behind Colonel D. in plain clothes, and *giving a command* to the men who were at that moment under Dawkins's charge.

The issue of this case, as conveyed in the decision of the commander-in-chief, is rather bewildering. The decision is, "that there was nothing against Colonel Dawkins's character or honour as a gentleman, and that his statements were, his royal highness considered, partly true; also that it was not a case for a court-martial. But after the opinion of the court, he gave Colonel D. the option of selling his commission, otherwise he should recommend her Majesty to exercise her prerogative of placing him on half-pay."

Would that these men of war could be persuaded by any means to make less war with each other. There is no end to the intestine strife which is waged among them, no end to their squabblings and bickerings. They remind one sometimes of schoolboys, more than men with a business to attend to. Like boys, they tell tales out of school, as in the case of one Colonel P., representing the commander-in-chief in certain investigations going on in India, who, quarrelling with one Major F.—also engaged in the same investigations, but on behalf of the Bengal commissariat—appeals, in the heat of argument, to the opinion of the commander-in-chief, and then, when the major, also in the heat of argument, states that "he has no respect for either the public or private character of the said commander-in-chief," goes and tells what the naughty major has said, and gets him removed from his post in the commissariat.

Occasionally the quarrels among the gallant gentlemen are of a different nature altogether. Sometimes, for instance, it will happen that some veteran officer, some old brigadier, "whose heart still beats towards the fair," will manifest a passion for some lady, into whose society Destiny has thrown him, but who, alas! is no longer free to respond to the brigadier's passion. Then will it happen further that the brigadier will write love letters to the lady during her husband's absence "up country"—the scene taking place in India—that a male relation will interfere, that the brigadier will repent, and promise to write no more love letters, but shortly afterwards will become hardened again, falling to with the pen and ink and the rose-coloured paper more sedulously than ever; till at last the husband of the persecuted lady, hearing the news, threatens to horsewhip the amorous brigadier, who thereupon is compelled to retire from the service, and is heard of no more. Cases of this sort are not unknown.

Any person possessed of tolerably observant faculties, who will take the trouble of paying a little attention to the class of "difficulties" which we have been considering in this paper, will hardly fail to be struck by the fact that a very great number of the disturbances which occasionally take place in "the service," occur at meal-times. A large proportion of these differences of opinion seem to originate at or after mess; which, to persons of a comfortable and well-disposed nature, is a grievous thing to think of. Imagine a man, as we have seen just now, who has newly set down to dinner, starting up again that he may take to kicking a chinniah. It is monstrous.

Here is an instance of a very bitter dinner-table squabble, which must have been exceedingly bad for the digestion of both the parties concerned in it. The difference of opinion seems, in this case, to have originated in certain horse transactions, and the quarrel would appear to have run its course with an almost unparalleled rapidity. The dispute is between Cornet Delacour and Veterinary-Surgeon Anthony, and the subject of it is a race, in which the latter gentleman has been guilty of the monstrous offence, in Cornet D.'s eyes, of running a horse as his own which is, in fact, the property of somebody else. The veterinary surgeon denies that this is the case, upon which Mr. Delacour, becoming heated, tells Mr. Anthony that there is not a single horse in his stable which is, bonâ fide, his own property, but that they all belong to a certain Captain Tempest; a statement which so enrages Veterinary Surgeon Anthony, that he informs Cornet Delacour, in so many words that he is a "d—d liar and a cur!" One of the witnesses examined at the court-martial, in the course of which these particulars come out, testifies that on hearing these remarkable words, Mr. Delacour turned round, and said to those sitting near him; "Now, boys, we've got him." Another witness merely says that Cornet Delacour looked much astonished. All agree that his answer to the remark of the veterinary surgeon was that he (Mr. Anthony) "might shut up, for that he was nothing more than a d—d stud groom of Captain Tempest." [The reader cannot fail to be edified by the charming candour with which these officers, and gentlemen, express their opinions of each other in their after-dinner talk.] On hearing this accusation, Mr. Anthony becomes very furious, is with difficulty kept in his seat, vows that he will personally assault the individual who has dared to insult him, and ultimately, when this

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pleasant and harmonious meal comes to an end, does assault him, and is put under arrest forthwith. Apologies are tendered, but they won't do, and Veterinary Surgeon Anthony is dismissed the service—the cornet getting off scot-free; though he certainly inaugurated the dispute, and though those words "now, boys, we 've got him," if he really uttered them, certainly were rather suggestive of a plot to get the veterinary surgeon out of the regiment.

One or two more instances showing the extraordinary kind of offences of which these gentlemen of the British army will sometimes suspect each other, shall bring our examination of these queer military scandals to a close. There is a story extant, the exact truth concerning which no merely human intellect can arrive at with any certainty, but which concerns an officer belonging to that regiment of dragoons commanded by the renowned Colonel Crawley of the Mhow court-martial—of which last by the bye, not a word has been said in this article, simply because the reader already has by heart everything that can be said about that very celebrated cause. The story with which we have to do is of more recent date, and is all about—Heaven save the mark—a couple of numbers of the Court Journal—an innocent periodical, one would have thought, incapable, in any way of setting a regiment of dragoons by the ears. The intelligible points connected with this "difficulty" are soon disposed of. Two numbers of the Court Journal had been, it seems, placed on a certain day on the table of the mess reading-room, from which place they were almost immediately afterwards carried off by some person, or persons, unknown, and were not returned. This being an infringement of rules, a form was prepared and sent round to each of the officers, stating what had happened, and containing an inquiry whether the periodical in question had been temporarily removed from the mess-room by any one of the officers thus addressed. An application to which they all—including a Lieutenant Davies, concerning whom this fable is narrated—returned an answer in the negative. Under these difficult circumstances it is that we next find Sergeant Hand, who has charge of the reading-room and its contents, having recourse to a proceeding, which, if taken on his own responsibility, as he says it was, was certainly a strong measure for a non-commissioned officer to venture on—nothing less in short than placing a native boy behind a glass-door which commanded the reading-room, to watch every one of the officers who should come into the room, and observe whether any one of them would bring back the Court Journals, and endeavour to replace them on the library table without being observed. The thing was done however; the native boy went to his post of observation, and, according to his evidence, had not watched long before he saw "Davies Sahib" enter the room, take up a newspaper, pretending to read it, and then, after furtively looking round to see if he was observed, drew a couple of newspapers from under his jacket, and thrust them under a pile of "Bell's Lives," which lay convenient to his hand.

So far, the story is intelligible enough, but from this point it becomes involved in such a prodigious tangle of misrepresentation, hard swearing, tattling, and small gossiping, that truly it seems as if a "Daniel come to judgment," would have but a poor chance of getting at the rights and wrongs of it. There is a Corporal Lucas who gets into the plot, about this time, who was certainly in two, if not more, places at once—Corporal Lucas, who was in an adjoining room, and whom the native boy declares that he went and fetched, in order that the corporal might witness the proceedings of Davies Sahib *which had already taken place;* and which, strangest of all, he (Corporal Lucas) *did* witness, according to his own statement, made with an amount of circumstantiality which reminds one of Sheridan's "little bronze bust," and the "double letter from Northamptonshire." The conglomeration is indeed very bewildering, but it becomes more so afterwards, when Mrs. Davies comes forward and asserts that there could be no motive for her husband's abstracting the Court Journals, inasmuch as this inestimable periodical was regularly lent to them, as it arrived, by a friend at the station who was in the habit of taking it in. But what is all this to the delirium in which the unhappy individual who has wandered into this case, finds himself involved, when he reads the evidence of another witness —a civilian this time—a Mr. Brockman, who asserts that the faithless Lucas came to him on a certain occasion and told him that all the evidence which he (Lucas) had given against Lieutenant Davies was false, and that he had been compelled to give it by certain regimental potentates who could, and would, have ruined him if he had disobeyed. And here a new element is introduced into the affair—a suggestion that this charge has been trumped up in consequence of a feeling of animosity entertained towards Mr. Davies by one of his brother officers, between whom and Davies dispeace had arisen, because his (the brother officer's) wife, had "said things" about his (Davies's) wife, intimating that she was "no lady," whereupon Mr. Davies declined to return the brother officer's salute, and the brother officer appealed to the colonel, and venom became developed in the brother officer's bosom, and so it all ended, according to one of the many versions of the story which are extant, in the Court Journal business described above.

Here, then, is a case in which an officer and a gentleman is supposed by other officers and gentlemen to have been capable of purloining a couple of numbers of the Court Journal. We will follow it up with another, in which tastes of a less intellectual kind are imputed to the accused person.

In the "modern instance" before us—and it is a very modern one, indeed, the events to be detailed being of the most recent occurrence—

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we find that exalted Indian official, Sir W. Mansfield, entertaining certain dire suspicions in his own mind that his aid-de-camp, Captain Jervis, had been making free with certain stores of which he had the charge, and which were the property of no less a person than Sir William himself. Among the numerous and most varied functions devolving upon Sir William's aid-de-camp—of which something more presently—those of housekeeper or steward seem to have held a prominent place, and it was in the exercise of this office that he obtained the entire control over all the good things, such as ham, preserved meats, choice wines, and even sardines, Harvey sauce, and pickles—as it comes out in evidence—with which the great Sir William's store-rooms were filled.

When and how it happened that misgivings first entered the mind of Sir William concerning the strict honesty of his aid-de-camp, it seems difficult to find out. Such misgivings, however, did enter his mind and found rest there; and so one day, after a consultation of a somewhat critical nature with his butler, he determined to bring Captain Jervis before a court-martial, charging him with the misappropriation, among other things, of one hundred bottles of sherry, two of port, sixty-one of champagne, twenty-four of sauterne, eighty-eight of claret, and one hundred and fourteen of that favourite Indian beverage bitter beer. He is also accused of making free with a bottle of vinegar, one of mustard, two of salad oil, one of mixed pickles, two of Harvey sauce and sundry jars of capers, jam, and other delicacies. There had been picnics got up it appeared at the station during Sir William's absence, when a great many of these stores had been made use of, and when, according to the accusation brought against him, Captain Jervis had sold some of the wines belonging to his chief to some of the officers of the regiment. Of course the aid-de-camp's indignant defence is that he had intended to make all these things good when the time came for sending in his accounts, setting the value of the different articles against certain sums due to him from Sir William for other matters, and so striking a clear balance. But there would seem to have been all sorts of delays in the rendering up of these same accounts, and Sir William appears to have become impatient, and so the accusation and the court-martial followed. Captain Jervis appears to have made himself unpopular with his commanding officer in various ways, but especially by this slowness in sending in his accounts; a reluctance which may have been, in part, attributable to an announcement made by Lady Mansfield, who appears to have got mixed up in some mysterious way in the transaction, that she herself was minded to examine the accounts of this suspected aid-de-camp, or one might almost say aide-de-*ménage*, at the first available opportunity.

There is one circumstance connected with this great sardine and pickle case which, though not directly bearing on the theme which we are illustrating, is yet in itself so good and refreshing, that it must be allowed to come in for a word in parenthesis. On one of the days of trial a certain document, or, as it was called, a "memo," elaborately defining Sir William Mansfield's ideas as to the duties of an aid-de-camp, was put in in evidence, as showing that at least Captain Jervis, who had had many previous opportunities of studying it, could not plead ignorance of the things that were expected of him in his official capacity. As the reader would, perhaps, like to know what is expected—in private life—of these gentlemen, whose duties have always seemed to us outsiders to consist in galloping wildly about at reviews and sham fights from one part of the mimic battle-field to another, with no particular object, we will just quote one or two extracts from this wonderful "memo," by way of imparting some information on this important subject to those whom it may concern.

We find it stated in this document, "That aides are to wait daily on Sir William, and that the one in waiting is to dine; that orders from Lady M. are to be regarded as orders from Sir William himself." "Proper respect is to be shown to guests," Sir William says, and, à propos of this, makes the following special remarks: "Many visitors having come, on one of Lady M.'s reception days, for the purpose of waiting on her ladyship, it seems to have been forgotten by the A.D.C. in waiting that it was part of his duty to usher in ladies or gentlemen who called, and to remain in the drawing-room while the visit lasted, *peforming his part in the entertainment of the visitors*, and showing them out again."

"The commander-in-chief has learnt, with great pain, that in the case of one of his aids-de-camp, the ordinary civility of calling upon families who are in the habit of visiting at his excellency's house has been omitted. His excellency says, once for all, that he cannot permit such a state of things, now that it has come to his knowledge. No officer is fit to be an A. D. C. if it does not suit him to call generally on *all* the visiting acquaintances of his excellency and Lady M., and to be on such terms of familiar courtesy as to be able to take his part in the general conversation of the dinner-table and the drawing-room, with the ease of one on visiting terms." Arduous duties these for a gentleman who might happen to have "no conversation," and who might yet be a valuable and efficient officer. But Sir W. has not done with his victim yet, as we find by the following: "His excellency desires to signify his disapproval of the disappearance of an A. D. C. from the drawing-room after dinner, before the departure of the guests. This, however unintentional, is a rudeness to the guests, and disrespectful to the lady of the house, unless there is an especial engagement, which, in the ordinary course of society, should be mentioned to the latter."

We have space but for one more extract from the memo.: "When Lady M. is in India, any

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hint which she may give with regard to matters connected with the establishment, leaving of cards, reception of visitors, &c. &c., is to be received as if it were an absolute order from the commander-in-chief. Whenever Lady M. may require the presence of an A. D. C., the latter is to be in uniform."

Sir William elsewhere states that he considers it part of the military duty of an aid-de-camp to manage the household expenses of his chief economically.

This irresistible digression disposed of, it remains only to add, concerning the original story, that Captain Jervis is acquitted, by the court, of all dishonest intentions in connexion with his commanding officer's salad-oil and Worcestershire sauce, and that, upon the whole, this officer comes out of the ordeal better than his accusers. But what a case! What cases, in short, are both these last which we have been considering. English gentlemen taking part in accusing their habitual associates of practices of which one would hardly suspect a costermonger's boy! English gentlemen plainly supposing each other to be capable of entertaining felonious intentions towards certain sixpenny periodicals, or of attempting to get possession of a few shilling jars of pickles by dishonest means.

Now there are a great many partisans of our existing army arrangements who would ask at this point whether, if we were to examine the lives of any set of men belonging to any profession, we should not meet with as many infringements of the laws which regulate good manners as have been quoted here? Perhaps we should, is our answer; but, then, let us always remember that these other professions do not take such high ground as this one of arms. It is this that makes us so critical. When we find one particular calling set aside as especially the property—so to speak—of gentlemen, we naturally watch the conduct of the members of such calling a little jealously, to see whether this proud boast of theirs is well, or ill, grounded.

In this not too critical spirit, we cannot help asking: Are the proceedings detailed in some of those cases, which have been quoted above, the proceedings of gentlemen? Are the men whom you meet at an ordinary mess-table, now-a-days, more invariably gentleman-like than other men? Are there none among them whom you feel instinctively to be what, for want of a better name, must be called snobs—utter and unmitigated? Is there any snob more hopelessly and entirely snobbish than one who holds a commission in the army? He may be an exceptional character, but still he is there, and your purchase system does not, nor ever can, guarantee you against his intrusion.

And, indeed, how should it? Does the possession, by the friends and relatives of—let us say—Ensign Jones, of a sufficient sum of money to buy him a step, when occasion offers, prove—past the possibility of confutation—that Jones is a gentleman? Taking this last much-abused word in its lowest sense, as meaning a person who has been accustomed from his boyhood to mix with what are called the upper classes of society, there is still no reason why one ensign should, because his friends have got some money, be able to come up to even this unexalted standard. It may have been that during all the early part of this youth's life, that money, which turns out so useful now, was as yet unacquired. The career to which the father of the future ensign was devoted, may have been what "society" calls a "low" one; and, during all the early years of our youngster's life, the money, some of which was to buy his commission, may have been only beginning to accumulate, and so the future ensign may not have had those advantages of education and association with what the world calls good society, which are essential to the formation of the habits of a gentleman—always using the word in this, its lowest and most generally accepted sense.

A hundred other instances of a similar kind to the instance which we have supposed will occur to any one who chooses to turn his thoughts in this particular direction—instances which show to demonstration how very possible it is for a clown to be possessed of money enough to buy a commission in the army, and so to become an officer without becoming a gentleman.

THE LATE MISS HOLLINGFORD.

CHAPTER VII.

Several weeks passed before I saw anything more of Rachel Leonard than my passing glimpse of her in the snow at sunrise. Mrs. Hollingford, who never had been in any but the poorest houses on the estate, walked over with me, at Mrs. Hill's request, to pay a morning visit at the hall. On that occasion no Miss Leonard was to be seen. She must have gone out walking—so said the maid who went to seek her in her room; and we came back to the farm without having seen her. Then arrived Mrs. Hill to return the visit, but no Miss Leonard accompanied her. Rachel was confined to bed with a cold. The girls, who had hoped for a sight of her, were disappointed.

And so the days went on, till it happened that I went to stay at the hall. I had received two or three invitations, and had always found an excuse to stay away. At last it seemed ungracious to stay away any longer, and I went.

How the hall was changed since the quiet time of our "reading days," when the solitary wreath of smoke went up from Mrs. Beatty's chimney, and the echo of one's step on the stone stair rang round the gallery above! Now the hall, that had used to look so wide and chilly, with its grim ornaments of busts and authors, was decorated with flowers from the hothouse, and cheered by a blazing fire. A soft murmur of prosperity was heard throughout the house, as if luxury were gliding about in her velvet slippers, giving orders in her modulated voice, and

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breathing her perfumed breath into all the corners. The presence of life had wrought upon the handsome sticks and stones that furnished the rooms, and transformed them into household gods. Firelight twinkled in all the chambers, bringing out the lustre of coloured glass and costly hangings into the sallow daylight of the winter noon. I do not know how it was that on the day of arrival at the hall I made my appearance at an earlier hour than they expected me. I learned afterwards, by chance, that they had not looked for me till the dinner hour, whilst I understood that it was desired of me to present myself early in the day, so that Rachel and I might have some quiet hours during which to renew our acquaintance before we should be called upon to mix among the company now staying at the hall. Good Mrs. Hill was one of those people whose manner would make you believe that if you deny them the thing they desire at your hands, you will undoubtedly destroy their peace, but who will probably have forgotten their request and its motive whilst you are yet pondering it, and forcing your own will that it may be complied with. The mistake about the hour of my arrival was one of those pieces of confusion which seem too trifling ever to be worth clearing up. But it was a mistake which caused me months of unutterable misery.

The idea of the visit had always been distasteful to me; but, having made up my mind to go, I thought it was better to be amiable for John's sake. About mid-day I said goodbye to the three who were already my mother and sisters, and set out to walk across the moor to the hall. John was to dine with the Hills that day, so I should see him in the evening. My baggage had been sent on before me early in the morning. It seemed very absurd to feel so sorry at leaving home to stay at a fine house, where the hours would be one scene of feasting and merry-making. In earlier days it would have been otherwise. But the farm, with its busy inmates, its old-fashioned nooks and corners, its homely sights and sounds, had grown strangely sufficient for the desires of my life.

I arrived at the hall, gaining the grounds by a descent from the hill at their back, and coming, so, round by the gardens to the house. Mrs. Hill was out driving with some of her guests. Mr. Hill was out with some of his guests. A maid would go and seek for Miss Leonard, and in the mean time I was conducted to my room.

Such a room as it was. I smiled at myself for thinking it so grand, for I had certainly slept in as fine a chamber before. But of late I had forgotten how long is wealth's list of necessities, and had learned to live without a velvet dormeuse at the fireside of my sleeping apartment, branches of wax-candles on the mantel, and long mirrors on every side to make me feel as if half-a-dozen impertinent young women were for ever prying into, and making a mockery of, my movements. I had lately been accustomed to hear the heels of my shoes go clinking over the well-waxed boards of my simple room, and to look out at the woods and fields through a narrow framework of white dimity. Here were voluptuous curtains and carpets that forbade sound, and denied the daylight. The farm was my beau-ideal of a home; therefore my room at the farm was my beau-ideal of a room: therefore all this comfort was oppressive and ridiculous.

Miss Leonard did not come to seek me. Perhaps she was out. I guessed there was a mistake, and made myself content. I declined the services of a maid, unpacked my trunk, and laid out my dinner dress upon the bed. After this I knew not what to do, and sat down to rest. I looked at the swelling dormeuse over whose cushions the firelight wavered drowsily. "We are not likely to have velvet couches at the farm," I thought, "and it is better to despise such foolish luxuries." So I drew out a stiff-backed chair, and sat down to muse before the fire.

I soon got tired of this, for I could not think without conjuring up my familiar wonders and forebodings, and these must be kept in the background in order that I might conduct myself properly in this house. I opened my door and looked around me. I knew the place well, but I did not care to be seen roaming about before I had received a welcome from my host or hostess. Weariness enabled me to overcome this difficulty, and I presently found myself in the gallery where the pictures hung and the curiosities were displayed in their cabinets; where chairs were placed for people to sit upon, and screens erected to keep away the draughts; and where the light from the stained dome in the roof fell mellowly over the knight made of armour, who stood quite at the end of the gallery, near a narrow staircase which led down to the back premises of the house. This knight was as an old friend. Mopsie had been very fond of a nook formed by the angle of the wall at his back, and in the days of our "readings" had dragged a deep-seated arm-chair up the staircase close by, and arranged a tall light screen behind his shoulders, forming a tiny triangular chamber. When I came upon this retreat now I took possession of it, for it was a pleasant place to sit in. The massive helmet of the knight on his pedestal soared above the top of the screen, and stood out in bold relief against the soft brilliance of the painted dome. I seated myself in Mopsie's chair, and drew a little book from my pocket. In this little book John had copied out for me some sweet quaint rhymes which were favourites of his and mine, and because I had thought the writing and the writer could never be glorified enough, I had wrought round the margin of the pages a border of fanciful arabesque, which I had filled in with colours and gold.

I turned over the pages absently. By-and-by I heard footsteps coming down the gallery, and voices drawing near me. I hoped that, whoever the people were, they might pass on

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without perceiving me. I did not like the idea of strangers peeping in behind the screen and wondering who I could be. But the people came nearer, still conversing in low earnest tones, the sound of which made me start and wonder. They came up to the screen, which was just at the end of the gallery, and stopped there as people will pause at the extremity of a walk before they turn to retrace their steps. And it seemed as if my heart paused with them, for the speakers were Rachel Leonard and John Hollingford, and this was the conversation I heard:

"I think you are very unkind, John," said Rachel; and she spoke sullenly, and as if she had been crying. "I only ask you not to hurry me, to give me time, and you complain as if I had refused altogether."

"I do not understand why you should want time," replied John; "if what you have told me is true, if what you have promised is in good faith, I do not see why you should delay making everything known."

"Nor do I see why you should wish for haste," said Rachel. "The announcement will be painful enough when it must be made. Have you ever thought of what Margery will say?"

"Margery! God bless her!" said John, earnestly. "Sweet, unselfish soul! It will be a shock, but she will get over it. While this is going on, her eyes are a continual reproach to me. The position is intolerable. If you will not speak soon I must break my promise to you, and enlighten her"

"No, no, no!" said Rachel, passionately. "She suspects nothing, and let her rest awhile. She will not take it so quietly as you think. Every one will cry out at me, and I know that I deserve it. Pity me, John"—here her voice broke down—"but, for God's sake, leave me to myself for a time."

"Let it be a short time, then," said John, sadly. "I must say I am grieved to see that this is such a hard trial to you. After all that has been, all you have told me, I did not expect to find you so weak and selfish."

"I am weak and I am selfish," sobbed Rachel; "do not expect to find me anything else. I am struggling to be something better; but whatever I am, John, be sure that I love you, and have loved you all these years. Leave me a little time, and I will do everything you wish."

"Let it be so, then," said John—"a short time, remember. My poor, dear girl! My lost darling, so unexpectedly found."

And they walked away together down the gallery talking, till their voices and their steps died away. The thick yellow daylight was almost extinct in the gallery by this time, and it was nearly dark behind the screen. It was night at four o'clock in those days, and it was not till the dressing-bell for dinner rang at near seven that I went feeling my way along the gallery, back to my own chamber. I do not know what I had been doing in the mean time. A chorus of soft voices warbled in conversation on the stairs as a band of graceful ladies tripped up to their several apartments. Miss Leonard came to me in my rich, hot, heavy room, and helped me to dress. I told her I had come too soon, and had been rambling about. I believe that was what I said. She fastened my sash, and even tied my sandals, for my fingers were shaking. She bent over my feet with her glorious face and her firm white hands. I think she had a black velvet frock and a diamond waist buckle; but I am not sure. The charm of her beauty overshone these things. As she busied herself among my hooks and eyes, I saw our two reflections, in a glass—she who had loved John for years, and I who had only known him for a few short months.

As I went down the stairs with Rachel, I told myself it was true what John said, that I should get over it. The drawing-room was full of gay people, and my first thought was, looking round it, that there was no man there equal to John—no woman there equal to Rachel. Why had I thrust myself between them?

When John took my hand with just his old loving pressure, the first wave of despair broke over me. "Get over it?" I asked myself; but that was all. I believed that John was sitting by Rachel, but I did not see the dinner-table, nor the people sitting at it. They thought I was shy or proud, and did not trouble me with conversation. A sound was in my ears, which I thought was like the rushing of a storm in an Indian forest. All my life lay before me like a blot of ink on a bright page. Why must I give trouble, and carry a sore heart? Why was I left behind to come to Hillsbro'? Why did not my father and mother take me with them that I might have died of their fever and been buried in their Indian grave? But how Rachel laughed. All the evening she was the most brilliant, beautiful, witty creature that ever enlivened a company.

CHAPTER VIII.

My children, when I sat that night over the embers of my dying fire in my chamber at Hillsbro' Hall, whilst every one else was asleep, there has never been a more desolate creature in the world than I felt myself to be. I had behaved all the evening very meekly and quietly, keeping out of John's way, accepting Rachel's attentions, watching and admiring her with a dull kind of fascination. I remember observing absently, in a mirror at the other end of the room, the white pensive face of a young girl sitting very still in a corner, wrapped in thought or pain. I wondered whether she was sick or in trouble; but afterwards I found by accident that I had been speculating about myself. A little chill smile came to my lips at this discovery; but I felt hardly any surprise at seeing myself thus so different from what I had ever been before. The world had changed, and I with it, since the fall of twilight in the gallery.

Rachel sang and the room applauded; people

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danced and Rachel amongst them; young gentlemen were introduced to me, and I told them "I don't dance" with my cold lips. There was an agonising pressure on my senses of sound, light, perfume. I thought it was these things that gave the pain, while from my heart, which seemed perfectly still, came forth at intervals the repetition "I will get over it, I will get over it." John found me out, and said, quite startled, "What is the matter with you, Margery?" I complained of "my head," and drew back within the shelter of a curtain. "Margery, my dearest, you are ill," he said, and then the floodgates of bitterness opened in my heart. How long was he going to act a cruel lie to me? I said, "I am ill; I must go to bed." He followed me out of the room, questioned me anxiously, wrapped me in a shawl, stood at the foot of the stairs watching till I passed out of sight; all as if he had still loved me.

When I reached my room I blew out my candles, and the fireplace was the only spot of light in the large shadowy room. I walked up and down in the dark, thinking about it all. I could imagine how Rachel and John had met whilst I was still in Miss Sweetman's schoolroom. There had been a quarrel, and then had come John's misfortunes, and they had never met again till that morning in the sunrise on the snow. I knew the story as perfectly as if the firelight were printing it all over the walls, for me to read. And then I had risen up between them, and here I stood between them, now, when all their mistakes had been cleared up, and all their old feelings revived. Well, I would not be in their way. I would go away from Hillsbro'.

I crept over to the fire, drew the embers together, and watched them waning and dying in the grate. I no longer told myself that I should get over it. I knew that I should not die, nor go mad, nor do anything that people could talk about; but deep in my heart I knew that here was a sorrow that would go with me to my grave. I felt that I was not a girl to put my foot on the memory of it, and go out into the world again to be wooed and won afresh. I knew that the spring of my days was going to end in winter. Then I thought of how I had turned my back upon the whole world, all the world that I knew, to follow my mother's friends to Hillsbro'; how I had loved them, how I had given my whole heart and faith to John; how trusting, how satisfied, how happy I had been. At last my heart swelled up in softer grief, and I wept with my face buried in my arms where I lay upon the hearthrug. And so after long grieving I sobbed myself to sleep, and wakened in the dark, towards morning, shuddering with cold in my thin dress.

The next day I was ill with a feverish cold, and Rachel tended me. Never was there a nurse more tender, more patient, more attentive. I was not at all so ill as to require constant watching, but she hovered about my bed, applying remedies, tempting me with dainties, changing my pillows, shifting the blinds so as to keep the room cheerful, yet save my burning eyes from the light. She would not be coaxed away from me even for an hour. Mrs. Hill, though kind and sympathetic herself, in a different way, was dissatisfied, I think. There were other guests, and she was a lady who took the duties of hospitality seriously to heart. But Rachel, playful and charming, even when provoking, knew how to manage her adopted mother. There were whispered discussions between them, of which I, lying with closed eyes, was supposed to know nothing, and then Rachel would steal her graceful arm round Mrs. Hill's portly waist, and kiss her, and put her out of the room. Mrs. Hill was very good to me, and scrupulously left her poodle dog on the mat outside the door when she came to visit me; but her vocation was not for waiting in sick rooms.

Rachel, soft-voiced, light-footed as a sister of mercy, moved about in her pale grey woollen gown, with a few snowdrops in her breast, her face more thoughtful and sad, yet sweeter than I had ever seen it. She had a work-basket beside her, and a book while she sat by the head of my bed, but I saw that she occupied herself only with her thoughts, sitting with her hands laced loosely together in her lap, gazing across the room through a distant window at the ragged scratchy outlines of the bare brown wood that hid the chimneys of the farm from the view of the inmates of the hall.

It needed no witchcraft to divine her thoughts. She was thinking of John at the farm, and possibly of all that had passed there between him and me. It saddened her, but I, thought she must be very secure in her faith, for there was no angry disturbance in her anxious eyes, no bitterness of jealousy about her soft sweet lips. I read her behaviour all through like a printed legend; her faithful kindness, her tender care, her thoughtful regret. She was feeling in her woman's heart the inevitable wrong she was about to do me, measuring my love by the strength and endurance of her own, and pitying me with a pity which was great in proportion to the happiness which was to be her own lot for life.

Everywhere she moved I followed her with John's eyes, it seemed, seeing new beauties in her, feeling how he must love her. In my weak desolation I wished to die, that I might slip quietly out of the hold of my kind enemy, leaving vacant for her the place from which she was going to thrust me with her strong gentle hands. But under her care I recovered quickly.

Never had there been such a nurse, such a petting, fondling, bewitching guardian of an ill-humoured, nervous, thankless patient. How lovingly she tucked me up on the couch by the fireside; how unweariedly she sought to amuse me with her sprightly wit; how nimbly her feet went and came; how deftly and readily her hands ministered; I could never tell you half of it, my dears! If her face fell into anxious

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lines while my eyes were closed, no sooner did I seem to wake to consciousness again than the sunshine and the archness beamed out. Once or twice it smote me that she wondered at my petulance and gloom—wondered, not knowing that my time had already come, that the burden of the sorrow she had brought me was already upon my shoulders. "Are you in pain, dear?" she would ask, perplexed. "I am afraid you are worse than we think;" and I would answer, coldly, "Thank you; I suffer a little, but it will pass away. It is only weakness. Pray do not trouble yourself so much about me."

My only excuse was that my heart was breaking; but this I could not explain. And still she was faithful and winning, would not take offence, and would not be repelled. It was hard work trying to hate her, and I gave it up at last. One time when her hand hovered by me I caught it going past, kissed it, and burst into tears. "Forgive me," I said; "you are an angel, and I——" I felt that I had been something very evil in the past few days. "My poor little nervous darling!" she said, down on her knees, with her arms about me, "what shall we do to make you strong?" "Little" she called me, though I was as tall as she. I acknowledged her superior greatness for compelling love, and letting the bitterness roll out of my heart for the time, like a huge load, I laid my head upon her shoulder for a long miserable cry. Desperately I invented excuses for my tears, but I shed them, and they did me good. After that I no longer struggled against the spell of her attraction. I loved her even out of the depths of the misery she had caused.

She saw that I was growing to love her, and she was glad, and I winced at her delight. She was thinking that by-and-by, when I should have "got over it," she and I would be friends. I smarted silently, and smiled. I would not be a weeping, deserted damsel. I would try to be strong and generous, and keep my sorrow to myself.

During this illness of mine, which lasted about a week, John came often to the hall to inquire for me. Good little Mrs. Hill would come into the room smiling, and say, "Rachel, you must go down to Mr. Hollingford. He wants to hear from your own lips about your patient." And she would sit with me, talking about her dogs and the county families, till Rachel's return, who always brought me kind messages, and seemed anxious to deliver them faithfully. I thought she always came back with signs of disturbance in her face, either very pale, or with a heightened colour. Once I thought she looked as if she had been crying; she pulled down the blinds immediately on entering the room, and sat with her back to the light.

"Margery," said she, by-and-by, "Mrs. Hollingford is coming to see you to-morrow."

"Is she?" said I, with a great pang at my heart.

I could not say "I am glad," for the dear old lady's true face rose up before me, a treasure I had lost, and I lay back among my cushions, and thought it would be well if I could die.

The next morning Rachel was restless and absent. Early in the day she left me suddenly, and came back dressed in her riding-habit.

"I am going for a ride, dear," she said, hurriedly. "I am not very well; I need fresh air. You can do without me for a few hours, I dare say."

Something in her manner made me wonder. I heard the mustering of horses on the gravel, and dragged myself to the window to see if John Hollingford were of the party. But he was not there. Lying on my sofa afterwards, I remembered Mrs. Hollingford's expected visit, and felt sure that Rachel had gone away to avoid her. I remembered that they had never yet met, and I easily saw a reason for Rachel's fearing her eyes at present. In the midst of these reflections came my dear second mother.

Mrs. Hill brought her to me. The contrast between the two was striking. Mrs. Hill was short, fat, and plain, and had narrowly escaped from Nature's hands without the stamp of a vulgar little woman. Mrs. Hollingford was tall and slender, with a worn noble face, and, in spite of all circumstances, looked the ideal of an ancient "high-born ladye."

When I looked at her, I felt that it would be impossible for me to go back to the farm. I thought that when we found ourselves alone I would tell her what I had learned, and beg of her to permit me to go straight from the hall to London, whence I could write a letter of release to John. But Mrs. Hill stayed with us some time, and in the mean time my courage oozed away. When I found myself face to face with her, and no one else there, I could not say a word of my confession. I realised what would be her dismay, her indignation, and, worst of all, I feared her incredulity. She would assuredly speak to John when she went home, and all my pride revolted at the thought. So I let the opportunity go by.

I told her of Miss Leonard's kindness. She had been a little hurt, I think, at the young lady's absence, but she was never used to look for slights, and my testimony cleared away all shadow of offence. Afterwards I found that the girls at home were indignant at Miss Leonard's hauteur. They had expected something different. She had disappointed them. Mrs. Hill was courteous, Mr. Hill was kind, but Miss Leonard ignored the dear old mother altogether.

"'Tis always the way with upstarts," said Jane; and the foolish little hearts were up in arms.

"Tell me, my darling," said Mrs. Hollingford, with her arm round my neck, "is there anything amiss between you and John?"

"What could there be amiss?" I said, kissing her hand, and avoiding her eyes. "I have

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not seen him since the day I came here. He has called to inquire for me constantly."

"I thought of it before you left us," she said, sadly, "and I fear it more every day. He is—you are both strangely altered. Margery, don't jilt my son. He is not as fine a gentleman as others you may see, but you will never meet his like."

I turned my head away, and said nothing. What was there that I could say? My heart was big with much that I could not tell, and I was silent. And so the occasion passed away. Mrs. Hollingford went home with a bitter doubt in her heart; and the doubt was all of me.

After she had gone, Mrs. Hill came and sat with me, and tried to amuse me. She was a good little woman, but her gossip was tiresome, and her anecdotes worldly. I was glad when her duty to her other guests carried her away. You will find it hard, my dears, to understand from my account of this time that I was staying at a pleasant country-house full of merry-making people. But the people were only shadows to me, and the time a puzzle. What was not real to me then, I cannot make real to you now.

The afternoon was wet and windy, and the riding-party returned early, all but Rachel and another lady and gentleman. These came home later. I was sitting in my room, in the firelight, alone, when Rachel came to me, laughing, in her wet riding-habit, saying she had had enough of the weather.

"I said, "Yes, it is a pity you went."

"No, not a pity," she said. Then, "Has not Mrs. Hollingford been here?"

"Yes," I said.

"Here, in this room, with you?"

"There, in that chair by your side."

She turned and looked at the chair with a strange look, which was wonderful to see, but quite indescribable. She drew it to the hearth, and sat down in it, throwing back her wet skirts and leaning towards the fire. Then I saw that she looked pale and worn, as if her riding had not done her much good.

"Do you not love her, this Mrs. Hollingford?" she said, presently.

"Dearly," I said.

"Will you describe her to me?" said Rachel.

"She is tall and handsome," I began.

"Yes," put in Rachel, "I have heard so."

"There is something grand about her, though she dresses as gravely and poorly as a nun. Her face is sweet and sad, and can be stern. Her hair is silver grey——"

"No," said Rachel, hurriedly, "brown. I heard that it was a beautiful chesnut-brown."

"It is nearly white now," said I.

Rachel did not speak again for some minutes. Looking at her presently, I was surprised to see her face quivering, and great shining tears following one another swiftly and silently into her lap.

"Do not mind me," she said. "I went to see a poor girl on the estate, who is dying. Her mother was sitting at the head of her bed. She told me the girl had never vexed her in her life."

"And has that made you sad?" asked I, thinking the girl was to be envied.

"Very sad," said Rachel; "sadder than I could tell."

We were silent awhile, and then said Rachel, "It must have made her grow old before her time, that trouble."

"Do you mean Mrs. Hollingford?" said I.

"Yes," said Rachel. "The grief, and the shame, and the blight."

"There should be no shame, no blight for the innocent," I said.

"The world does not think so," said Rachel, with a stern cloud on her face.

"The world!" I said, contemptuously.

She lifted her eyes from the fire to my face. "Yes, I know you are a brave independent little soul," she said. "Will you answer me one thing truly? Did you not feel even a shadow of shrinking or regret when you promised to marry John Hollingford?"

"Not a shadow," I said, bitterly. "I accepted him for what I believed him to be, not for what the world might think of him."

"I wish God had made me like you," she said, solemnly; and then got up, with a wild sad look in her face, and left me without another word, forgetting to lift up her wet trailing habit, which she dragged along the ground as she went.

After she had gone I sat there, angry, amazed, and sick at heart. I thought she had well said to John, "I am weak and selfish." I had never told her of my engagement, and she had talked to me of it unblushingly. Thinking of her own sacrifice, she had forgotten my wrong and pain. I had seen into the working of her thoughts. She could love John and injure me, but she could not be content without the approval of the world. The young farmer was worthy of love, but he was not rich enough, nor grand enough, nor was his soiled name fitted for the spoilt child of wealth. She could steal away my treasure without enriching herself—could destroy the peace of two minds, without creating any contentment for herself out of the wreck. "Poor John!" I thought, "your chances of happiness are no better than my own, even though you have paid a dishonourable price for them." And I hated her after that.

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THE MOONSTONE.

By the Author of "The Woman in White," &c. &c.

Second Period. The Discovery of the Truth. (1848—1849.)

CHAPTER IV. (CONTINUED).

I occupied the parlour floor, at that period of my residence in London. The front parlour was my sitting-room. Very small, very low in the ceiling, very poorly furnished—but, oh, so neat! I looked into the passage to see which of Lady Verinder's servants had asked for me. It was the young footman, Samuel—a civil fresh-coloured person, with a teachable look and a very obliging manner. I had always felt a spiritual interest in Samuel, and a wish to try him with a few serious words. On this occasion, I invited him into my sitting-room.

He came in, with a large parcel under his arm. When he put the parcel down, it appeared to frighten him. "My lady's love, Miss; and I was to say that you would find a letter inside." Having given that message, the fresh-coloured young footman surprised me by looking as if he would have liked to run away.

I detained him to make a few kind inquiries. Could I see my aunt, if I called in Montagu Square? No: she had gone out for a drive. Miss Rachel had gone with her, and Mr. Ablewhite had taken a seat in the carriage too. Knowing how sadly dear Mr. Godfrey's charitable work was in arrear, I thought it odd that he should be going out driving, like an idle man. I stopped Samuel at the door, and made a few more kind inquiries. Miss Rachel was going to a ball that night, and Mr. Ablewhite had arranged to come to coffee, and go with her. There was a morning concert advertised for to-morrow, and Samuel was ordered to take places for a large party, including a place for Mr. Ablewhite. "All the tickets may be gone, Miss," said this innocent youth, "if I don't run and get them at once!" He ran as he said the words—and I found myself alone again, with some anxious thoughts to occupy me.

We had a special meeting of the Mothers' Small-Clothes-Conversion Society, that night, summoned expressly with a view to obtaining Mr. Godfrey's advice and assistance. Instead of sustaining our sisterhood, under an overwhelming flow of trousers which had quite prostrated our little community, he had arranged to take coffee in Montagu Square, and to go to a ball afterwards! The afternoon of the next day had been selected for the Festival of the British-Ladies'-Servants'-Sunday-Sweetheart-Supervision-Society. Instead of being present, the life and soul of that struggling Institution, he had engaged to make one of a party of worldlings at a morning concert! I asked myself, What did it mean? Alas! it meant that our Christian Hero was to reveal himself to me in a new character, and to become associated in my mind with one of the most awful backslidings of modern times.

To return, however, to the history of the passing day. On finding myself alone in my room, I naturally turned my attention to the parcel which appeared to have so strangely intimidated the fresh-coloured young footman. Had my aunt sent me my promised legacy? and had it taken the form of cast-off clothes, or worn-out silver spoons, or unfashionable jewelry, or anything of that sort? Prepared to accept all, and to resent nothing, I opened the parcel—and what met my view? The twelve precious publications which I had scattered through the house, on the previous day; all returned to me by the doctor's orders! Well might the youthful Samuel shrink when he brought his parcel into my room! Well might he fly when he had performed his miserable errand! As to my aunt's letter, it simply amounted, poor soul, to this—that she dare not disobey her medical man.

What was to be done now? With my training and my principles, I never had a moment's doubt.

Once self-supported by conscience, once embarked on a career of manifest usefulness, the true Christian never yields. Neither public nor private influences produce the slightest effect on us, when we have once got our mission. Taxation may be the consequence of a mission; riots may be the consequence of a mission; wars may be the consequence of a mission: we go on with our work, irrespective of every human consideration which moves the world outside us. We are above reason; we are beyond ridicule; we see with nobody's eyes, we hear with nobody's ears, we feel with nobody's hearts but our own. Glorious, glorious privilege! And how is it earned? Ah, my

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friends, you may spare yourselves the useless inquiry! We are the only people who can earn it — for we are the only people who are always right.

In the case of my misguided aunt, the form which pious perseverance was next to take revealed itself to me plainly enough.

Preparation by clerical friends had failed, owing to Lady Verinder's own reluctance. Preparation by books had failed, owing to the doctor's infidel obstinacy. So be it! What was the next thing to try? The next thing to try was—Preparation by Little Notes. In other words, the books themselves having been sent back, select extracts from the books, copied by different hands, and all addressed as letters to my aunt, were, some to be sent by post, and some to be distributed about the house on the plan I had adopted on the previous day. As letters they would excite no suspicion; as letters they would be opened—and, once opened, might be read. Some of them I wrote myself. "Dear aunt, may I ask your attention to a few lines?" &c. "Dear aunt, I was reading last night, and I chanced on the following passage," &c. Other letters were written for me, by my valued fellow-workers, the sisterhood at the Mothers' Small-Clothes. "Dear madam, pardon the interest taken in you by a true, though humble, friend." "Dear madam, may a serious person surprise you by saying a few cheering words?" Using these and other similar forms of courteous appeal, we reintroduced all my precious passages under a form which not even the doctor's watchful materialism could suspect. Before the shades of evening had closed around us, I had a dozen awakening letters for my aunt, instead of a dozen awakening books. Six I made immediate arrangements for sending through the post, and six I kept in my pocket for personal distribution in the house the next day.

Soon after two o'clock I was again on the field of pious conflict, addressing more kind inquiries to Samuel at Lady Verinder's door.

My aunt had had a bad night. She was again in the room in which I had witnessed her Will, resting on the sofa, and trying to get a little sleep. I said I would wait in the library, on the chance of seeing her. In the fervour of my zeal to distribute the letters, it never occurred to me to inquire about Rachel. The house was quiet, and it was past the hour at which the musical performance began. I took it for granted that she and her party of pleasure-seekers (Mr. Godfrey, alas! included) were all at the concert, and eagerly devoted myself to my good work, while time and opportunity were still at my own disposal.

My aunt's correspondence of the morning —including the six awakening letters which I had posted overnight—was lying unopened on the library table. She had evidently not felt herself equal to dealing with a large mass of letters — and she might be daunted by the number of them, if she entered the library later in the day. I put one of my second set of six letters on the chimney-piece by itself; leaving it to attract her curiosity, by means of its solitary position, apart from the rest. A second letter I put purposely on the floor in the breakfast-room. The first servant who went in after me would conclude that my aunt had dropped it, and would be specially careful to restore it to her. The field thus sown on the basement story, I ran lightly up-stairs to scatter my mercies next over the drawing-room floor.

Just as I entered the front room, I heard a double knock at the street-door—a soft, fluttering, considerate little knock. Before I could think of slipping back to the library (in which I was supposed to be waiting), the active young footman was in the hall, answering the door. It mattered little, as I thought. In my aunt's state of health, visitors in general were not admitted. To my horror and amazement, the performer of the soft little knock proved to be an exception to general rules. Samuel's voice below me (after apparently answering some questions which I did not hear) said, unmistakably, "Up-stairs, if you please, sir." The next moment I heard footsteps—a man's footsteps—approaching the drawing-room floor. Who could this favoured male visitor possibly be? Almost as soon as I asked myself the question, the answer occurred to me. Who *could* it be but the doctor?

In the case of any other visitor, I should have allowed myself to be discovered in the drawing-room. There would have been nothing out of the common in my having got tired of the library, and having gone up-stairs for a change. But my own self-respect stood in the way of my meeting the person who had insulted me by sending me back my books. I slipped into the little third room, which I have mentioned as communicating with the back drawing-room, and dropped the curtains which closed the open doorway. If I only waited there for a minute or two, the usual result in such cases would take place. That is to say, the doctor would be conducted to his patient's room.

I waited a minute or two, and more than a minute or two. I heard the visitor walking restlessly backwards and forwards. I also heard him talking to himself. I even thought I recognised the voice. Had I made a mistake? Was it not the doctor, but somebody else? Mr. Bruff, for instance? No! an unerring instinct told me it was not Mr. Bruff. Whoever he was, he was still talking to himself. I parted the heavy curtains the least little morsel in the world, and listened.

The words I heard were, "I'll do it to-day!" And the voice that spoke them was Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's.

CHAPTER V.

My hand dropped from the curtain. But don't suppose—oh, don't suppose—that the dreadful embarrassment of my situation was the uppermost idea in my mind! So fervent still was the sisterly interest I felt in Mr. Godfrey, that I never stopped to ask myself why he was not at the concert. No! I thought

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only of the words—the startling words—which had just fallen from his lips. He would do it to-day! He had said, in a tone of terrible resolution, he would do it to-day. What, oh what, would he do! Something even more deplorably unworthy of him than what he had done already? Would he apostatise from the faith? Would he abandon us at the Mothers' Small-Clothes? Had we seen the last of his angelic smile in the committee-room? Had we heard the last of his unrivalled eloquence at Exeter Hall? I was so wrought up by the bare idea of such awful eventualities as these, in connexion with such a man, that I believe I should have rushed from my place of concealment, and implored him in the name of all the Ladies' Committees in London to explain himself—when I suddenly heard another voice in the room. It penetrated through the curtains; it was loud, it was bold, it was wanting in every female charm. The voice of Rachel Verinder!

"Why have you come up here, Godfrey?" she asked. "Why didn't you go into the library?"

He laughed softly, and answered, "Miss Clack is in the library."

"Clack in the library!" She instantly seated herself on the ottoman in the back drawing-room. "You are quite right, Godfrey. We had much better stop here."

I had been in a burning fever, a moment since, and in some doubt what to do next. I became extremely cold now, and felt no doubt whatever. To show myself, after what I had heard, was impossible. To retreat—except into the fireplace—was equally out of the question. A martyrdom was before me. In justice to myself, I noiselessly arranged the curtains so that I could both see and hear. And then I met my martyrdom, in the spirit of a primitive Christian.

"Don't sit on the ottoman," the young lady proceeded. "Bring a chair, Godfrey. I like people to be opposite to me when I talk to them."

He took the nearest seat. It was a low chair. He was very tall, and many sizes too large for it. I never saw his legs to such disadvantage before.

"Well?" she went on. "What did you say to them?"

"Just what you said, dear Rachel, to me."

"That mamma was not at all well to-day? And that I didn't quite like leaving her to go to the concert?"

"Those were the words. They were grieved to lose you at the concert, but they quite understood. All sent their love; and all expressed a cheering belief that Lady Verinder's indisposition would soon pass away."

"*You* don't think it's serious, do you, Godfrey?"

"Far from it! In a few days, I feel quite sure, all will be well again."

"I think so, too. I was a little frightened at first, but I think so too. It was very kind to go and make my excuses for me to people who are almost strangers to you. But, why not have gone with them to the concert? It seems very hard that you should miss the music, too."

"Don't say that, Rachel! If you only knew how much happier I am—here, with you!"

He clasped his hands, and looked at her. In the position which he occupied, when he did that, he turned my way. Can words describe how I sickened when I noticed exactly the same pathetic expression on his face, which had charmed me when he was pleading for destitute millions of his fellow-creatures on the platform at Exeter Hall!

"It's hard to get over one's bad habits, Godfrey. But do try to get over the habit of paying compliments—do to please me."

"I never paid *you* a compliment, Rachel, in my life. Successful love may sometimes use the language of flattery, I admit. But hopeless love, dearest, always speaks the truth."

He drew his chair close, and took her hand, when he said "hopeless love." There was a momentary silence. He, who thrilled everybody, had doubtless thrilled *her*. I thought I now understood the words which had dropped from him when he was alone in the drawing-room. "I'll do it to-day." Alas! the most rigid propriety could hardly have failed to discover that he was doing it now.

"Have you forgotten what we agreed on, Godfrey, when you spoke to me in the country? We agreed that we were to be cousins, and nothing more."

"I break the agreement, Rachel, every time I see you."

"Then don't see me."

"Quite useless! I break the agreement every time I think of you. Oh, Rachel! how kindly you told me, only the other day, that my place in your estimation was a higher place than it had ever been yet! Am I mad to build the hopes I do on those dear words? Am I mad to dream of some future day when your heart may soften to me? Don't tell me so, if I am! Leave me my delusion, dearest! I must have *that* to cherish, and to comfort me, if I have nothing else!"

His voice trembled, and he put his white handkerchief to his eyes. Exeter Hall again! Nothing wanting to complete the parallel but the audience, the cheers, and the glass of water.

Even *her* obdurate nature was touched. I saw her lean a little nearer to him. I heard a new tone of interest in her next words.

"Are you really sure, Godfrey, that you are so fond of me as that?"

"Sure! You know what I was, Rachel. Let me tell you what I am. I have lost every interest in life, but my interest in you. A transformation has come over me which I can't account for, myself. Would you believe it? My charitable business is an unendurable nuisance to me; and when I see a Ladies' Committee now, I wish myself at the uttermost ends of the earth!"

If the annals of apostacy offer anything com-

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parable to such a declaration as that, I can only say that the case in point is not producible from the stores of *my* reading. I thought of the Mothers' Small-Clothes. I thought of the Sunday-Sweetheart-Supervision. I thought of the other Societies, too numerous to mention, all built up on this man as on a tower of strength. I thought of the struggling Female Boards, who, so to speak, drew the breath of their business-life through the nostrils of Mr. Godfrey—of that same Mr. Godfrey who had just reviled our good work as a "nuisance"—and just declared that he wished he was at the uttermost ends of the earth when he found himself in our company! My young female friends will feel encouraged to persevere, when I mention that it tried even my discipline before I could devour my own righteous indignation in silence. At the same time, it is only justice to myself to add, that I didn't lose a syllable of the conversation. Rachel was the next to speak.

"You have made your confession," she said. "I wonder whether it would cure you of your unhappy attachment to me, if I made mine?"

He started. I confess I started too. He thought, and I thought, that she was about to divulge the mystery of the Moonstone.

"Would you think, to look at me," she went on, "that I am the wretchedest girl living? It's true, Godfrey. What greater wretchedness can there be than to live degraded in your own estimation? That is my life now."

"My dear Rachel! it's impossible you can have any reason to speak of yourself in that way!"

"How do you know I have no reason?"

"Can you ask me the question! I know it, because I know *you*. Your silence, dearest, has never lowered you in the estimation of your true friends. The disappearance of your precious birthday gift may seem strange; your unexplained connexion with that event may seem stranger still——"

"Are you speaking of the Moonstone, Godfrey?"

"I certainly thought that you referred——"

"I referred to nothing of the sort. I can hear of the loss of the Moonstone, let who will speak of it, without feeling degraded in my own estimation. If the story of the Diamond ever comes to light, it will be known that I accepted a dreadful responsibility; it will be known that I involved myself in the keeping of a miserable secret—but it will be as clear as the sun at noonday that I did nothing mean! You have misunderstood me, Godfrey. It's my fault for not speaking more plainly. Cost me what it may, I will be plainer now. Suppose you were not in love with me? Suppose you were in love with some other woman?"

"Yes?"

"Suppose you discovered that woman to be utterly unworthy of you? Suppose you were quite convinced that it was a disgrace to you to waste another thought on her? Suppose the bare idea of ever marrying such a person made your face burn, only with thinking of it?"

"Yes?"

"And, suppose, in spite of all that—you couldn't tear her from your heart? Suppose the feeling she had roused in you (in the time when you believed in her) was a feeling not to be bidden? Suppose the love this wretch had inspired in you——? Oh, how can I find words to say it in! How can I make a *man* understand that a feeling which horrifies me at myself, can be a feeling that fascinates me at the same time? It's the breath of my life, Godfrey, and it's the poison that kills me—both in one! Go away! I must be out of my mind to talk as I am talking now. No! you mustn't leave me—you mustn't carry away a wrong impression. I must say, what is to be said in my own defence. Mind this! *He* doesn't know—he never will know, what I have told *you*. I will never see him—I don't care what happens—I will never, never, never see him again! Don't ask me his name! Don't ask me any more! Let's change the subject. Are you doctor enough, Godfrey, to tell me why I feel as if I was stifling for want of breath? Is there a form of hysterics that bursts into words instead of tears? I dare say! What does it matter? You will get over any trouble I have caused you, easily enough now. I have dropped to my right place in your estimation, havn't I? Don't notice me! Don't pity me! For God's sake, go away!"

She turned round on a sudden, and beat her hands wildly on the back of the ottoman. Her head dropped on the cushions; and she burst out crying. Before I had time to feel shocked at this, I was horror-struck by an entirely unexpected proceeding on the part of Mr. Godfrey. Will it be credited that he fell on his knees at her feet?—on *both* knees, I solemnly declare! May modesty mention that he put his arms round her next? And may reluctant admiration acknowledge that he electrified her with two words?

"Noble creature!"

No more than that! But he did it with one of the bursts which have made his fame as a public speaker. She sat, either quite thunderstruck, or quite fascinated—I don't know which — without even making an effort to put his arms back where his arms ought to have been. As for me, my sense of propriety was completely bewildered. I was so painfully uncertain whether it was my first duty to close my eyes, or to stop my ears, that I did neither. I attribute my being still able to hold the curtain in the right position for looking and listening, entirely to suppressed hysterics. In suppressed hysterics, it is admitted, even by the doctors, that one must hold something.

"Yes," he said, with all the fascination of his evangelical voice and manner, "you are a noble creature! A woman who can speak the truth, for the truth's own sake—a woman who will sacrifice her pride, rather than sacrifice an honest man who loves her—is the most priceless of all treasures. When such a woman marries, if her husband only wins her esteem and regard,

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he wins enough to ennoble his whole life. You have spoken, dearest, of your place in my estimation. Judge what that place is—when I implore you on my knees, to let the cure of your poor wounded heart be my care. Rachel! will you honour me, will you bless me, by being my wife?"

By this time I should certainly have decided on stopping my ears, if Rachel had not encouraged me to keep them open, by answering him in the first sensible words I had ever heard fall from her lips.

"Godfrey!" she said, "you must be mad!"

"I never spoke more reasonably, dearest—in your interests, as well as in mine. Look for a moment to the future. Is your happiness to be sacrificed to a man who has never known how you feel towards him, and whom you are resolved never to see again? Is it not your duty to yourself to forget this ill-fated attachment? and is forgetfulness to be found in the life you are leading now? You have tried that life, and you are wearying of it already. Surround yourself with nobler interests than the wretched interests of the world. A heart that loves and honours you; a home whose peaceful claims and happy duties win gently on you day by day—try the consolation, Rachel, which is to be found *there!* I don't ask for your love—I will be content with your affection and regard. Let the rest be left, confidently left, to your husband's devotion, and to Time that heals even wounds as deep as yours."

She began to yield already. Oh, what a bringing-up she must have had! Oh, how differently I should have acted in her place!

"Don't tempt me, Godfrey," she said; "I am wretched enough and reckless enough as it is. Don't tempt me to be more wretched and more reckless still!"

"One question, Rachel. Have you any personal objection to me?"

"I! I always liked you. After what you have just said to me, I should be insensible indeed if I didn't respect and admire you as well."

"Do you know many wives, my dear Rachel, who respect and admire their husbands? And yet they and their husbands get on very well. How many brides go to the altar with hearts that would bear inspection by the men who take them there? And yet it doesn't end unhappily—somehow or other the nuptial establishment jogs on. The truth is, that women try marriage as a Refuge, far more numerously than they are willing to admit; and, what is more, they find that marriage has justified their confidence in it. Look at your own case once again. At your age, and with your attractions, is it possible for you to sentence yourself to a single life? Trust my knowledge of the world—nothing is less possible. It is merely a question of time. You may marry some other man, some years hence. Or you may marry the man, dearest, who is now at your feet, and who prizes your respect and admiration above the love of any other woman on the face of the earth."

"Gently, Godfrey! you are putting something into my head which I never thought of before. You are tempting me with a new prospect, when all my other prospects are closed before me. I tell you again, I am miserable enough and desperate enough, if you say another word, to marry you on your own terms. Take the warning, and go!"

"I won't even rise from my knees, till you have said yes!"

"If I say yes you will repent, and I shall repent, when it is too late!"

"We shall both bless the day, darling, when I pressed, and when you yielded."

"Do you feel as confidently as you speak?"

"You shall judge for yourself. I speak from what I have seen in my own family. Tell me what you think of our household at Frizinghall. Do my father and mother live unhappily together?"

"Far from it—so far as I can see."

"When my mother was a girl, Rachel (it is no secret in the family) she had loved as you love—she had given her heart to a man who was unworthy of her. She married my father, respecting him, admiring him, but nothing more. Your own eyes have seen the result. Is there no encouragement in it for you and for me?"*

"You won't hurry me, Godfrey?"

"My time shall be yours."

"You won't ask me for more than I can give?"

"My angel! I only ask you to give me yourself."

"Take me!"

In those two words, she accepted him!

He had another burst—a burst of unholy rapture this time. He drew her nearer and nearer to him till her face touched his; and then——No! I really cannot prevail upon myself to carry this shocking disclosure any farther. Let me only say, that I tried to close my eyes before it happened, and that I was just one moment too late. I had calculated, you see, on her resisting. She submitted. To every right-feeling person of my own sex, volumes could say no more.

Even my innocence in such matters began to see its way to the end of the interview now. They understood each other so thoroughly by this time, that I fully expected to see them walk off together, arm in arm, to be married. There appeared, however, judging by Mr. Godfrey's next words, to be one more trifling formality which it was necessary to observe. He seated himself—unforbidden this time—on the ottoman by her side. "Shall I speak to your dear mother?" he asked. "Or will you?"

She declined both alternatives.

"Let my mother hear nothing from either of us, until she is better. I wish it to be kept a secret for the present, Godfrey. Go now, and come back this evening. We have been here alone together quite long enough."

* See Betteredge's Narrative. Chapter viii. page 147.

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She rose, and, in rising, looked for the first time towards the little room in which my martyrdom was going on.

"Who has drawn those curtains?" she exclaimed. "The room is close enough, as it is, without keeping the air out of it in that way."

She advanced to the curtains. At the moment when she laid her hand on them—at the moment when the discovery of me appeared to be quite inevitable—the voice of the fresh-coloured young footman, on the stairs, suddenly suspended any further proceedings on her side or on mine. It was unmistakably the voice of a man in great alarm.

"Miss Rachel!" he called out, "where are you, Miss Rachel?"

She sprang back from the curtains, and ran to the door.

The footman came just inside the room. His ruddy colour was all gone. He said, "Please to come down-stairs, miss! My lady has fainted, and we can't bring her to again."

In a moment more I was alone, and free to go down-stairs in my turn, quite unobserved.

Mr. Godfrey passed me in the hall, hurrying out, to fetch the doctor. "Go in, and help them!" he said, pointing to the room. I found Rachel on her knees by the sofa, with her mother's head on her bosom. One look at my aunt's face (knowing what I knew) was enough to warn me of the dreadful truth. I kept my thoughts to myself till the doctor came in. It was not long before he arrived. He began by sending Rachel out of the room—and then he told the rest of us that Lady Verinder was no more. Serious persons, in search of proofs of hardened scepticism, may be interested in hearing that he showed no signs of remorse when he looked at Me.

At a later hour I peeped into the breakfast-room, and the library. My aunt had died without opening one of the letters which I had addressed to her. I was so shocked at this, that it never occurred to me, until some days afterwards, that she had also died without giving me my little legacy.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

Amazement is too mild a word for my frame of mind, when the vergers of Westminster Abbey single us out during divine service, and after marked personal attentions deposit us in the stalls next the dean. It seems such a palpable mistake. Pride and shame contend for mastery while we are being paraded down the aisle, and a confused feeling that I must be somebody else without knowing it is strong within me as we run the gauntlet of choristers and congregation until our exalted place is reached. But mingling with and overpowering this internal conflict, is a conviction that I have met the cloaked figure now acting as guide, in some previous and less solemn stage of existence. His gait, his hair, his gestures, and his face are all familiar; and when, wand in hand, he left his reading-desk and approached our standing place, I was cogitating half unconsciously as to where I could have seen him before. Cogitation became perplexity when I found myself selected from the crowd; and not the least puzzling part of the business was that the faces of many of the black-gowned officials seemed equally familiar. Here was I, publicly recognised by one verger and with a conviction that I was on speaking terms with the rest, and yet with a certain knowledge that I had not been within the Abbey walls for years. But that my companion was equally favoured, and yet maintained his calm, my presence of mind would have forsaken me. "Employ them at my house to wait, and you saw them at my last dinner-party!" is his whispered explanation when I ask whether he often attends the Abbey services, and if not whether he was known to the vergers elsewhere? This told me all. "Champagne, 'ock, or sherry?" were the words I had previously heard from the highly respectable lips at the desk before me; and the anxiety with which my little difficulties in finding the anthem and the psalms of the day were watched, had in it some of the polite deference which distinguishes the administration of a pleasant and well ordered house. The Abbey vergers wait at parties! My companion employs them regularly, they recognise in him a liberal and frequent patron, and here you have the entire secret of my surprise. But it lasted through the service and while we were being shown round. The contrast between the day and evening employment of the men in cloaks gave quite a wine-y flavour to some of the dark chapels, and lent temporary association to ideas utterly dissimilar in themselves. It made the Abbey cloisters secular, and gave a monastic rendering to the past festivities of my friend. Not that the vergers were anything but competent, respectful, and in every way fit for their work. They formed a striking example to the servants of another great cathedral, and did their spiriting without rudeness or attempt at imposition. But the evening and dinner-party smile and bow were to my morbid vision omnipresent; and "Henry the Seventh," "Edward the Confessor," and "Geoffrey, Abbot of Westminster," rolled trippingly off the tongue exactly as if they were being announced in a drawing-room before dinner.

An announcement in this morning's Times has told me that the Abbey is open for inspection from ten to four in winter, and from ten to six in summer; that the dean and chapter gave every facility to visitors, and that the attendants are guiltless of the extortion and rudeness recently laid to their charge. We proceed to test the accuracy of these statements, and arrive at the Abbey at a quarter past three to find divine service in progress and that we shall not be able to put the dean and chapter to the proof for three quarters of an hour. The old story of a Londoner's ignorance of the Sights

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of London again comes upon us, and with renewed force. It is just after we have heard this that we are amiably pounced upon by the verger sitting immediately below the dean, and are taken into moral custody. From the vantage ground he lands us on we are compelled to see one half the choristers and singing men; and to generally remark the congregation. It is bright and sunny outside, this Saturday afternoon, and the dreamy, drowsy character of cathedral life comes strongly home to us in these carved seats. The verger at the clerk's desk, is so excessively kind and thoughtful that the least delay in finding our places brings his eye to bear, and I am in momentary dread that he will leave his seat and by pointing out the anthem again expose us to the wonder of the congregation. He spares me, however, and much relieved I venture to glance round. There are not many people present. Few of the lower stalls are occupied, and the people kept standing approach the number of those sitting down. The singing men when not practising their calling are studiously abstracted and indifferent. While the lesson is being read they become positively gymnastic in their efforts to seem at ease. Their writhing and undulations are at one time eel-like in their restlessness, while at another they resemble so many bales of white linen, so completely have they buried their heads in their priest-like robes. Dean Stanley in his book on Westminster Abbey tells us that the olden regulations for the monks at dinner were very precise. "No one was to sit with his hand on his chin, or his hand over his head, or as if in pain, or to lean on his elbows." It was impossible to avoid the wish that the dean would enforce some similar rule upon his lay assistants now.

The monuments and the Abbey are agreeably clean after St. Paul's. The fee for seeing all the sights, and hearing an elaborate description which lasts thirty-five minutes, is sixpence; and the guide-book sold by the vergers for a shilling is compact and comprehensive, telling the stranger the principal points he wishes to know. You may walk in the nave and visit Poets' or Whig's corner, unelbowed by tout, or cheat, or beggar. You may buy a book or not, as you will; the vergers give a civil reply to your questions if you put them; but if you choose to stand alone, you can meditate upon the monument of Pitt or Fox without fear of annoyance or interruption. Above all, the statues and monuments are taken care of. There is none of the abject neglect which shocked us so at St. Paul's. Before leaving the nave, we are arrested by a memorial window, which is sufficiently original to make one wonder why it is here. For its choice of subjects contrasts strongly with the figures of the twelve apostles, the agony in the garden, the raising of Lazarus, and the Ascension on the other windows near; and it is not until we read the name, Robert Stephenson, that we see the appropriateness of railway viaducts and bridges in stained glass. Stephenson's chief engineering works, Bonha-bridge over the Nile, the Britannia-bridge over the Menai Straits, the High Level-bridge at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, are mingled on this window with the building of Solomon's Temple, the building of the ark by Noah, the building of Nineveh, and the erection of the tabernacle, to the inevitable confusion of posterity. Nor do the figures which accompany these illustrations exhibit any biographical connexion with each other. It is perhaps appropriate that the portraits of George Stephenson, Telford, Smeaton, Watt, Rennie, and Robert Stephenson should be given in stained glass; but whether William of Wykeham, Hiram of Tyre, Noah, Sir Christopher Wren, Bezaleel, Cheops, and Michael Angelo, whose presentments appear in the neighbouring panes, can be strictly claimed as even professional connexions of the great engineer, is perhaps open to doubt.

Dean Stanley speaks of "that thin dark thread of those who, without historical or official claims, have crept into the Abbey, often from the carelessness of those who had the charge of it in former times;" and there is something touching in the humble graves of people who have never known ambition or tasted greatness, and who yet have drifted somehow into the last resting place of the powerful and mighty. Amid the array of glorious names, each of which is a history of achievement, we come upon "Jane Lister, dear child, October 7, 1688," and read that "her brother Michael had already died in 1676, and been buried at Helen's Church, York." Again, a still more insignificant life, Nicholas Bagenall, "an infant of two months old, by his nurse unfortunately overlaid," has his little urn; and a Mr. Thomas Smith, "who through the spotted veil of the small-pox, rendered a pure and unspotted soul to God, expecting but not fearing death;" while on another monument we read that

> With diligence and trust most exemplary
> Did William Lawrence serve a prebendary;

and after the name of John Broughton, the prince of prize-fighters, comes a space upon which was to have been written "Champion of England," but the dean of the period objected, and the blank remains. These obscure exceptions are grotesque enough in a place where, as has been well said, "we see how, by a gradual but certain instinct, the main groups have formed themselves round particular centres of death; how the kings ranged themselves round the Confessor; how the prince's courtiers clung to the skirts of the kings; how out of the graves of the courtiers were developed the graves of the heroes; how Chatham became the centre of the statesmen, Chaucer of the poets, Purcell of the musicians, Casaubon of the scholars, Newton of the men of science; how even in the exceptional details natural affinities may be traced; how Addison was buried apart from his tuneful brethren, in the royal shades of Henry the Seventh's chapel, because he clung to the vault

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of his own loved Montague; how Ussher lay besides his earliest instructor Sir James Fullerton, and Garrick beside his friend Johnson, and Spelman opposite his revered Camden, and South close to his master Busby, and Stephenson to his fellow-craftsman Telford, and Grattan to his hero Fox, and Macaulay beneath the statue of his favourite Addison."

Our personal popularity increases the longer we remain in the cathedral. The men employed by my friend have told other men of his hospitality and its needs; and from the nave to the pay-place near Poets' Corner our progress is one long ovation. When we have passed through the gate, we form a party of twenty-two, and are promptly shown round. "Saturday, gentlemen"—in a polite and private whisper this, as if an unusually rare vintage were being proffered—"Saturday is our busiest afternoon, because the people come from seeing the Houses of Parliament. No, sir, they never give us much trouble. Just walk through and see what I'm going to show you now, and ask a question or two, perhaps, but very rarely misconduct themselves. Three or four times a-day, sir, sometimes, and occasionally oftener; not very often—no—but sometimes, though. Yes, we each go round; but, as you'll doubtless be aware, sir, this depends a great deal on the public themselves. Yes." The verger's politeness to us, it is due to him to say, is only slightly in advance of his politeness to every one else. Two women with babies pester him like human gad-flies with foolish questions. They ask whether the statue to Lady Walpole—one of the most beautiful in the Abbey—is the Queen, and have "Wife of a great English minister" blandly given in reply. A couple of Germans, Badeker in hand, go with us from chapel to chapel, vainly trying to fit in the spoken and written descriptions with each other. Young and old people from the country, and working men and women, make up the rest of the party; and we are conveyed through the sights in the conventional way. There is, of course, the usual sing-song monotony in our guide's description; but it is not unintelligent, and he is ready to supplement it whenever asked. Banners dropping to pieces from age; helmets, breast-plates, and other warlike mementos in marble; old effigies of long-forgotten originals; the carvings, ornaments, and mouldings of centuries ago; memories which Addison mused over and Macaulay has celebrated, were all got through in thirty-five minutes. One of our companions asked another for the wax figures, and was told that they were not shown now; another commented on Henry the Seventh's Chapel as "funny;" while the cradle-tomb of an infant prince with a marble child asleep inside it brought the women-folk fairly to bay. We were glad not to be shown the wax figures. Tom Brown, whose humour was certainly not fastidious, gives a picture of them in his quaint "Walk through London and Westminster" which shows that, even in his day, the show was irreverent. Writing in 1708, he says: "And so we went to see the ruins of majesty in the waxen figures placed there by authority. As soon as we had ascended half a score stone steps, in a dirty cobweb hole, and in old worm-eaten presses, whose doors flew open at our approach, here stood Edward the Third, as they told us, which was a broken piece of waxwork, a battered head, and a straw-stuff'd body, not one quarter covered with rags; his beautiful queen stood by, not better in repair; and so to the number of half a score kings and queens, not near so good figures as the King of the Beggars makes, and all the begging crew would be ashamed of their company. Their rear was brought up with good Queen Bess, with the remnants of an old dirty ruff, and nothing else to cover her." Although eleven figures are said to be still in a tolerable state of preservation, the dean and chapter are wise in not competing with Baker-street; and though the blocks of effigies described by Stow also exist, it requires a keen antiquarian appetite to care for them. Charles the Second formerly stood over his grave, with General Monk (both in wax) near him. Mr. Ned Ward, in The London Spy, remarks of the former, with comically sweeping praise, that, "So much as he (the king) excelled his predecessors in mercy, wisdom, and liberality, so does his effigies exceed the rest in loveliness, proportion, and magnificence;" while General Monk's figure was famous because its cap was used to collect subscriptions for the showmen. Goldsmith's Citizen of the World asks, "What might this cap have cost originally?" and his guide answers, "That, sir? I don't know; but this cap is all the wages I have for my trouble." Both cap and custom are abolished, and no one was asked to add to the fixed fee of sixpence we paid on starting; but the popularity of the wax figures as a show and the keenness after tips displayed by the Abbey showmen of comparatively recent times are both shown in an anecdote told by Dean Stanley. After Nelson's public funeral, the car on which his coffin had been carried to St. Paul's was deposited there, just as the Duke of Wellington's is now, and became an object of such curiosity that the sightseers deserted Westminster, and all flocked to St. Paul's. This was a serious injury to the officials of the Abbey. Accordingly a waxwork figure of the hero was set up, said to have been taken from a smaller figure for which he had sat, and dressed in the clothes which he had actually worn. The result was successful, and crowds flocked once more to Westminster Abbey. It was the minor canons and lay vicars whose "too scanty incomes were eked out by fees, and who, in consequence, enlarged their salaries by adding as much attraction as they could by new waxwork figures, when the custom of making them for the funerals ceased. One of these is the effigy of Lord Chatham, erected in 1779, when the fee for showing them was, in consideration of the interest attaching to the great statesman, raised from threepence (it was originally a penny) to six-

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pence." A guide-book of 1783 says of this effigy: "Introduced at a considerable expense. . . . The eagerness of connoisseurs and artists to see this figure, and the satisfaction it affords, justly place it among the first of the kind ever seen in this or any other country." We are at least spared the degradation of such puffs as this by the regulations now in force, and we begin to feel a new confidence in the existing management of the Abbey.

A book of elegant extracts might easily be compiled from celebrated authors who have written on this grand old edifice, and who are quoted by the dean. Washington Irving sketches for us "the grey walls discoloured by damp, and crumbling with age," and shows with his usual felicity how "a coat of hoary moss has gathered over the inscriptions of several of the monuments, and obscured the death's heads and other funeral emblems." Raleigh slept in the gate-house of the old monastery the night before his execution; and Lovelace's famous lines:

> Stone walls do not a prison make
> Nor iron bars a cage,

were penned during his incarceration in the same chamber. Howell's Perlustration of London, published in 1657, says "The Abbey of Westminster hath been always held the greatest sanctuary and randevouze of devotion of the whole island: whereunto the situation of the very place seems to contribute much, and to strike a holy kind of reverence and sweetness of melting piety into the hearts of beholders." Waller says:

> The antique pyle behold,
> Where royal heads receive the sacred gold;
> It gives them crowns, and does their ashes keep.
> There made like gods, like mortals there they sleep.

Jeremy Taylor preached to the same effect, and Francis Beaumont had previously called upon his readers to

> Think how many royal bones
> Sleep within these heaps of stones.

Steele in his account of Betterton's funeral, and Lamb in his protest against the affected attitude and theatrical graces of the monument to Garrick, both moralise on the solemnities of the Abbey; and Addison's noble reflections there, are among the finest in the language. "When I am in a serious humour," wrote Mr. Spectator, "I very often walk by myself in Westminster Abbey; when the gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, with the solemnity of the building, and the condition of the people who lie in it, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy, or rather thoughtfulness, which is not disagreeable. . . . When I look upon the tomb of the great, every emotion of envy dies within me; when I read the epitaphs of the beautiful every inordinate desire goes out; when I meet with the grief of parents upon a tombstone, my heart melts with compassion; when I see the tomb of the parents themselves I consider the vanity of grieving for those we must so quickly follow; when I see kings lying by those who deposed them; when I consider rival wits placed side by side, or the holy men that divided the world with their contests and disputes, I reflect with sorrow and astonishment on the little competitions, factions, and debates of mankind. When I read the several dates of the tombs of some who died yesterday, and some six hundred years ago, I consider that great day when we shall all of us be contemporaries, and make our appearance together." Tickell in his "Lines on the Death of Addison," speaks of the luxury of ranging the gloomy aisles alone, and of the

> Just men, by whom impartial laws were given;
> And saints who taught, and led, the way to heaven,

whose names are sculptured near; and quotations might be multiplied indefinitely from the great English authors who have made Westminster their theme.

The coronation chair, with the stone of Scone, called "Jacob's Pillow," inclosed in it, which, it will be remembered, Sir Roger de Coverley tried, and in which Goldsmith "could see no curiosity," is shown us in due course by our guide, to the manifest interest of all. Visitors are kept off by a railing now, but we peer at it gravely, as if to read some mystic words in the plebeian cutting and scratching with which it is defaced. We hear how it has only once been moved out of the Abbey (when Cromwell was installed Lord Protector in Westminster Hall) since it was conquered from the Scots by Edward the First; how all the kings and queens of England have been crowned in it since; and how the chair by its side was made in imitation for the double coronation of William and Mary. No detail is too slight or trivial for our party; and the women with the babies linger by the ugly old relic as if fascinated, long after our urbane guide has moved away. It is worth remembering here that, as Dean Stanley reminds us, no other coronation rite in Europe reaches back to so early a period as that of the sovereigns of Britain. Tradition assigns Stonehenge as the spot where the half-fabulous Arthur was crowned. The coronation of the seven Saxon kings from Edward the Elder to Ethelred took place at the first ford in the Thames; Hardicanute's at Oxford; Canute's at St. Paul's; but the great crowning place of the Saxons became the sanctuary of the house of Cerdic, the cathedral of Winchester. Harold's coronation took place on the same day as the Confessor's funeral, when all was in such haste and confusion that it is doubtful whether the ceremony took place at Westminster or St. Paul's. But from the crowning of William the Norman, by the grave of his predecessor King Edward, whom he claimed to succeed not so much by victory as by right, our coronations have taken place in the Abbey. The religious ceremony, which was regarded as conferring some sacramental virtue, was as nearly as possible concurrent with the monarch's accession; and with the exception of Edward the First, in whose

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case delay was unavoidable, no sovereign before Elizabeth allowed any interval to elapse between their accession and their formal crowning. The delay in her case was the first symptom of decaying belief in the sacred prerogatives and exceptional virtues conferred on monarchs by coronation; and this was not the least healthy symptom of her vigorous reign.

After a brief glance at the chapter-house, now in course of restoration by Mr. Gilbert Scott, and a pleasant gossip concerning the noble appearance it will present when the recommendations of the Thames Embankment Commission are carried out, and the ugly modern houses near it are pulled down, we leave the "temple of silence and reconciliation, where the enmities of twenty generations lie buried," equally convinced of the excellence of the arrangements now in force for showing the cathedral, and of the patience and politeness displayed in carrying those arrangements out.

THE WORLD'S WAGES.

AN HUNGARIAN STORY.

In the hot midday sunshine a poor countryman was making his way homeward to his native village, wearied and bent under the ponderous burden he was bringing from the neighbouring town. He knew well that a scolding awaited him (as usual) from his ill-tempered wife, who had been expecting him with no little impatience, and every step seemed to tire him more, and to make his load heavier, as it brought him nearer to her rattling, wrangling tongue; he felt so wholly exhausted that he was glad to stagger to the boundary stone of an adjacent field, upon which he sat himself down to rest for a short quarter of an hour.

Under the stone, however, in a rut which had been made by a watercourse, or by the result of some accident which had caused the displacement of the stone, an enormous snake was hidden, and scarcely was the countryman seated ere the snake put out her head, and, with a loud but agonised hiss, thus spoke: "Welcome, welcome, friendly stranger! Take pity on me, and release me from the weight of this monstrous stone, which every instant threatens to crush me. It is more and more unbearable, and if you will not save me I must perish."

The countryman doubted whether he ought to assist a reptile of such known and hereditary enmity to man. He felt, however, some pity, though he hesitated to draw nearer to the snake; but the snake appealed to him with ever-increasing earnestness. "I implore, I conjure you, by all that is merciful! Save me! save me! I will reward you with every recompense that man pays to man for his good deeds—but save me!" The countryman could not resist the repeated piteous appeals; he mustered all his strength, turned over the stone, and released the prisoner.

What was his astonishment, what his fright, when the monster, full of fury, moved towards him, spitting poison and menacing destruction. He could scarcely find breath to ask, while pale and trembling he staggered away, "Is this the reward, the promised reward to thy deliverer!" The snake coldly replied, "Such are the world's wages for benefit; and I promised thee nothing more."

The words only increased the countryman's alarm, he saw no way of escape and no helper was at hand. Finding no hope of deliverance, his heart beating with horror, his cheeks streaming with tears, he thus addressed the terrible reptile, "I am in thy power, at thy mercy, I have neither strength nor courage to resist, and yet I cannot understand the meaning of thy discourse. I am a poor simple countryman, ignorant of the ways of the world. I know not whether its wages are such as you propose to pay. Enlighten me on this matter, or at least let some just judge decide between us."

"So be it," answered the snake. "'Tis a reasonable proposal. On that dry heath there is an ancient war horse, a far nobler beast than I may have appeared to thee, let us hasten to him; he shall be the judge."

No sooner said than done. The countryman moved tremblingly over the fields, and his venomous companion crept slowly behind him. They reached the burnt and grassless heather, and, behold, a grey horse stood before them—a ragged steed, a mere skeleton—whose nostrils were exploring the barren heath in search of a few scattered blades of grass. The snake broke the silence, and began to question the poor broken-down beast, "What dost thou here on this wild waste, while there is such a supply of rich fodder in the master's stables? What brought thy noble loins to such a wretched skeleton, which thy rough hide scarcely covers?" Neighing woefully, the horse replied, "Know you not that these are the common wages of the world, and it is thus that friendly services are rewarded? For thirty weary years I bore a valiant warrior on my back, I obeyed his every wink, I turned at his every touch of my bridle. Seven times I saved him in the battle tempest from fetters and from death. Now worn out by toil and time, no longer able to serve, he has delivered me over to the knacker, and soon my hide is to be severed from my bones."

"Ha! ha!" said the snake to the countryman. "Dost thou hear? Prepare for death, for that is thy doom." He spoke, coiled himself up, and was about to spring furiously upon the doomed one, but he threw himself down humbly on his knees between the horse and the snake, and thus put forward his petition, "Spare me, spare me but a little while; I have a wife and children at home. Who will provide for them if you destroy me? O let us appeal to another judge—the life of man hangs upon the award—and if he confirms the sentence given I will prepare myself for death."

"Agreed," said the crafty creature. "I grant also this to thee of my great grace." And they crossed the heather over to a thicket in which

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the snake had seen the form of an animal in the distance, and as they approached they found a very old hunting dog fastened with a cord to the trunk of a willow tree, lean and wretched, and utterly unable to protect himself from the swarms of flies that tormented him dreadfully.

"And who brought thee, Squire Harehunt, to this willow trunk—to this forlorn condition. Why, it was but the other day I saw thee joyfully and bravely following the game over the country. What does it all mean?" inquired the snake. The poor dog set up a bitter howl, and thus replied, "Such are the world's wages, such the recompense of friendly deeds. Six years I served my master with diligence and fidelity—served him in house and field—and deserved the name I bore; I was a terror to the hares, known and feared by their whole army; and now I am bound to this willow trunk, condemned to die, and only waiting the arrival of the keeper to despatch me."

The countryman shuddered body and soul. He saw the snake wreathing her folds in self-gratulation, and preparing to revel in the success of her machinations. All hope of delivery had vanished, and the poor countryman began to prepare himself for death, and to recommend himself to the keeping of God before drinking the bitter cup. But, lo! suddenly a fox sprung forward from the wood where he had been hidden, quickly took his place between the countryman and the snake, and very courteously asked what was the subject of their quarrel. He winked at the countryman, while the snake watched all his movements, and offered the poor man his patronage if he would help him to a good supply from the poultry yard. "Yes! yes!" said the countryman, upon which the fox said he would institute a proper inquiry into the whole affair.

And to the countryman's great astonishment, the snake gave her consent, and they conducted the wondering fellow back to the very boundary from which he had witnessed the beginning of his strange adventure.

When they reached the spot the fox betook himself to silent and thoughtful musings. He looked at the stone around, above and below, poked with his nose, brushed with his tail, and began an eloquent harangue: "Beloved, beautiful and accomplished snake! I can no more doubt or deny your right than I can add another charm to the grace of your body; nay, I am as sensible of the justice of your claims as is this stone to the brightness of the shining scales on your back, but I am somewhat perplexed with the question as to how your stately form could have been confined in this small hole. In order that I should form a righteous judgment the whole matter must be made clear."

"I will answer then at once," said the snake, and suddenly crept into the very hole where she had been before concealed. The fox gave a sharp wink to the countryman, who so suddenly and dextrously turned over the stone upon the snake that it was almost impossible for her to stretch out her head. "And couldst thou indeed breathe," inquired the fox, with affected wonderment; "couldst thou indeed breathe in this narrow uncomfortable place?" "Uncomfortable, indeed," said the snake, "very uncomfortable—the stone is so very heavy—let me out, let me out, or I shall be pressed to death." The last words were feebly uttered from the squeezed throat of the snake, but the countryman gaily answered. "No! no! my lady snake! remain where yet thou art," and he and his cunning deliverer wended their way homeward.

They had not proceeded far when the fox reminded the countryman of his engagement, and the countryman promised that on the very next morning he would have six noble cocks ready for breakfast, to which he invited him, whereupon the fox bade him heartily farewell, and slipped away into a vineyard that was near.

The countryman hurried back to his village as fast as his legs would carry him, but reached it only late in the evening; but before he perceived his cottage he heard in the distance the noisy shoutings of his impatient wife, and he had scarcely crossed the threshold ere she set upon him with all the fury of a wild beast as if she would destroy him. It was in vain he narrated to her the fearful adventures which had delayed his return, it was in vain he lauded the kindness of the benevolent fox which had been his deliverer, she only raved and scolded the more till the stream of her desperation was exhausted, and her poor husband was enabled to insinuate a word.

He told her of the promise he had made to the fox, and said that on its fulfilment her life and his own depended; but she burst out more furiously than ever, and swore that she would rather sacrifice him than surrender a single cock from her poultry-yard; and before the appearance of the morning star she stood armed with a sharp heavy hatchet behind the wicket door, and as the unsuspecting guest entered to partake of the proferred hospitality and had just stretched his head over the threshold she struck his neck with a mortal blow.

The countryman hearing the death-cry of the wounded fox hurried out of his chamber hoping to warn and to save him. It was too late. The dying fox was bathed in his own blood, and perished with the exclamation: "The world's reward for well-doing."

THE SONGS OF THE MUSIC HALLS.

"Songs without words," or songs of which the melody is played upon an instrument, without any aid from the voice are always more or less beautiful. Every tune gives some degree of pleasure to the lover of music, whether educated or uneducated; and no tune or melody can of itself, without association with human speech, convey to the mind any ideas that are not innocent and pure. Music can express joy, hope, love, tenderness,

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sorrow, melancholy, martial ardour, and deep religious feeling; or, by a discordant note, it may possibly express fear or anger. But music cannot convey the idea of indecency, spite, malice, jealousy, hatred, falsehood, revenge, or any of the mean and wicked passions. All music, in fact, is sacred. It is only when vulgar, silly, or indecent writers of verse associate tunes to their compositions, that music becomes linked in the mind with unworthy ideas. Music, in the case last mentioned, is in the pitiable plight of a Venus Aphrodite, dressed against her will in the dirty rags and foul garments of the street virago, or the harridan of the gutter. Of late years the love of music has very greatly increased among all classes of the English people; though the blessing has been attended with some serious drawbacks. Among the chief of these has been a vast increase of so-called comic songs of the lowest order, which has operated very injuriously upon the taste and morals of the multitude. Before proceeding further with the subject, let the writer state at once that he is no enemy of public amusements. He loves to see people enjoy themselves. He likes fun, provided it be funny. He likes humour, provided it be humorous; and he highly enjoys wit, provided he can have it unadulterated with obscenity or profanity. But he hates vulgarity and the habitual use of slang, and does not think that the language of thieves, or even of costermongers, is worthy of imitation. He prefers the society of gentlemen to that of "cads," and thinks that the crowning grace of a beautiful woman — without which all other charms and accomplishments are of no account—is modesty; not simply of thought and dress, but of action and demeanour. There is no reason among any of these loves and hatreds, why he or any one else should not approve of music and song for the million, and of the Music Halls that have within the last few years sprung up in all the populous towns and cities in England. The Music Hall is the opera house of the poor, and if the poor, differing in this respect from the rich, enjoy their songs, their ballets, and their acrobatic gymnastics much better with an accompaniment of beer and tobacco than without, there is no weighty reason why any sensible person should object to their recreation on that account: provided always that they keep within the bounds of sobriety and decorum. That the beer and the tobacco have a vulgarising and demoralising tendency is obvious enough; but, on the other hand, it must be admitted that the hard-working multitudes of our busy age have too little opportunity and means of recreation to justify the rigid censor in objecting to a public taste which he is powerless to elevate, provided that the bad taste leads to no offence against good morals.

In the days when there were no Music Halls in London, and when urban and suburban taverns and public houses were the resorts of tradesmen, clerks, mechanics and others who required amusement after their day's work, the comic muse was largely represented. There never was a time in England when gaiety and lightness of heart did not find expression in music. The songs, sentimental or comic, grave or gay, that pleased the English people before the days of Queen Elizabeth, have for the most part perished, but from the time of Shakespeare to our own, we know exactly the style of songs that amused our forefathers. Their comic songs were sometimes too free and loose for a refined taste, and sometimes they were silly and affected; but in the main there was a hearty humour and joyous wit about them, which removed them from the imputation of coarseness. Even up to so late a period as 1830, when Vauxhall Gardens, White Conduit House, and other places that were the direct predecessors of the Music Halls were open, the songs that were sung were not wholly adapted to the taste of "fast" men and women, or of "cads" and costermongers. Sentiment was not utterly banished, and the comic songs, though not very elevated as specimens of English composition or graceful as specimens of English wit, had a certain spice of fun and humour about them, that amused without disgusting the hearer. A collection of such songs published in 1830 in three volumes, and entitled the "Apollo," shows the wit that pleased the fancy, and the pathos that touched the hearts of the men and women of that day. The publishers took credit to themselves, not only for having carefully excluded from their pages "everything that could disgust the eye of modesty, or shock the ear of refinement," but for having "rejected every composition, however popular, that was nothing but flimsy rhyme and jingling nonsense." It must be admitted, however, that this excellent rule of selection was not rigidly adhered to, and that a large amount of very flimsy nonsense, indeed, found its way into the pages of the Apollo. Edmund Waller, in the days of Charles the Second, thought it hard that he should be called upon "to swear to the truth of a song," and it would be equally hard if the writer of a song purporting to be comic, were not allowed the privilege of harmless nonsense—for nonsense may often be witty as well as funny; and convey innocent pleasure, where good sense in a repulsive shape might fail to convey either pleasure or instruction. But nonsense is not to be confounded with inanity or stupidity, and especially with that lowest and vilest form of both, which borrows the language of pickpockets and cadgers, and knows no difference between mirth and blackguardism. And in this respect the comic nonsense of our fathers and grandfathers stands in very favourable contrast with the Music-Hall nonsense that has sprung into favour in the year 1868. In the not very remote days when William the Fourth was King, sentiment was not considered, as of necessity, to be unmanly, unwomanly, or silly; and the expression of honest love and disinterested friendship was not held to be inconsistent, either with delicacy or good sense. The songs of Dibdin, Burns, and

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Moore, continued to please all classes of the people, whether their nationality were English, Scotch, or Irish; and shared with many newer favourites, who endeavoured to follow in the path they had shown, the applause of the town. Madame Vestris, Mrs. Humby, Mrs. Waylett, Mrs. Honey, Miss Love, Miss Foote, Miss Maria Tree, and others, though they lent their sweet voices to comic, as well as to sentimental song, never lent them to vulgarity, or soiled their lips with the slang of swellmobsmen; and such singers of the other sex as Incledon, Braham, Sinclair, Wilson, Phillips, Templeton, and Russell, endeavoured to elevate and adorn the art to which they devoted their lives, and never pandered to a crapulous and depraved taste. But in this respect we have changed for the worse. The most notable characteristic of the public songs of our days, as far as the Music Halls are concerned, is their utter intolerance of sentiment. If a tender or ennobling thought has to be expressed before a popular audience it has to be rendered acceptable to the debauched palates of cynics and rowdies by a touch of farce, such as is supplied by the simple expedient of translating it into the vulgarest idiom, or blackening the face and hands of the singer. To the negro minstrels, or to white men masquerading in negro character, has been relegated all the tender and romantic sentiment of popular song; as if it were derogatory to the business-like character, and to the high intellect of a man with a white skin to sing sentimentally of anything so "spoony" as genuine affection or youthful faith and simplicity. These simulated negro songs, contemptible as they are in some respects, have a certain humour and pathos which render them superior to the comic songs which men with unblackened faces permit themselves to sing. There is here and there to be found in them a touch of manly and simple nature, which not even the garb or paint of "niggerism" can wholly degrade. But when we come to the songs of the very funny vocalists whose business does not require them to blacken their faces, and who conceive that the affectionate public loves them best under the familiar names of "Joe," or "Tom," or "Fred," or "Charlie," as the case may be; we find an absence alike of nature, of pathos, of humour, and of wit. They are not able to approach even to the boundaries of farce: and in order to understand their descriptions, accurate or inaccurate, of the manners of the day, the reader or hearer has to be familiar with the lowest phases of life in the metropolis; and be thus enabled to sympathise with the pursuits, feelings, modes of thought, of cadgers, costermongers, the least respectable class of servant girls, and of others of their sex still less respectable than they. By referring to the advertisements in the public press we find that three "splendid songs" called respectively "Champagne Charlie," "Moggie Dooral," and the "Chickaleery Cove," which are described as having been sung before the Prince of Wales, at some Music Hall unnamed, "by the special request of His Royal Highness." We turn to the collection in which these alleged favourites of royalty appear; and find it described in the publisher's preface as "a collection of *gems* that have called down upon the singers the most vociferous applause, that have found their way to the barrel organs, and been sung at the corners of every street." We are thus enabled to pass judgment upon the taste and humour which grace the comic muse of London in our day, and which are supposed to find admirers not alone among the needy and the seedy, the illiterate and the vulgar, with an occasional sprinkling of "cads and swells," who may be vulgar but are not illiterate, but among the highest and best educated classes. "Champagne Charlie" the first in the series, is the description of a disreputable "swell," with more money than brains, who haunts all the "supper rooms" of London "from Poplar to Pall Mall," and treats any girl with whom he comes in contact with as much champagne as she can drink.

> Champagne Charlie is my name,
> Good for any game at night, my boys,
> Who'll come and join me in a spree?

The "lady's version" of this composition—said to be sung by a "lady" in public, and to be adapted to the use of "ladies" in private, varies the chorus:

> Champagne Charlie was his name,
> Always kicking up a frightful noise,
> Kicking up a noise at night, my boys,
> And always ready for a spree.

Comment upon such a song is as needless as any remark upon the taste and manners of the so-called "ladies" who either applaud or sing it.

"Moggie Dooral" is stupider, if possible, than "Champagne Charlie;" but as it was originally a song of the "negro minstrels," and came from the other side of the Atlantic, it cannot be fairly placed to the discredit of London, unless for the minor offence of extending its favour and popularity. The first stanza will suffice as a specimen:

> Once a maiden fair,
> She had ginger hair,
> With her tooral, looral, la! di! oh!
> And she fell in love,
> Did this turtle dove,
> And her name was Dooral,
> Moggie Dooral,
> Cockie Dooral,
> Hoopty Dooral,
> Tooral, looral,
> Silly noodle, oh! my!

This "nigger" song depends for its success on the blackened faces and hands, and on the good comic acting of the singers, who endeavour—and not unsuccessfully—to make it grotesque.

The "Chickaleerie Cove," or the "Chickaleerie Bloke"—it is known under both titles—is

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the climax of the three royal favourites for dismal and revolting offensiveness. The language is not to be understood without a garotter's or a burglar's glossary to explain the "slang," the "flash," the "cant," and the "rommany," with which it is interlarded. One stanza will be more than sufficient for our pages. "Chickaleerie," it appears, stands for Whitechapel, and "bloke" is nineteenth century English for a man, or for a thing that so calls itself when it does not call itself a "swell."

> I'm a Chickaleerie *bloke* with my one, two, three,
> Whitechapel was the village I was born in,
> For to get me on the *hop*, or on my *tibby* drop,
> You must wake up very early in the morning;
> I have a *rorty gal*, also a knowing *pal*,
> And merrily together we jog on,
> I do not care a *flatch*, as long as I've a *tatch*,
> Some *pannum* for my chest and a *tog* on.

Let those who will, refer to Mr. Hotten's "slang dictionary" for an explanation of the strange words in this thieves' vocabulary. For ourselves we can say, that with every disposition to be tolerant, to make allowances for defects of education and for evil culture, and above all, with a desire to discover a soul of goodness in things evil, it is difficult to understand how any one claiming even on the most inadequate pretence to possess the most average share of human intelligence can take pleasure, with or without the accompaniment of beer and tobacco, in the hearing or the reading of such inane trash as this. We have heard it pleaded as some excuse for the disgraceful success of these songs, that the melodies to which they are sung are lively, sometimes even pretty, and always easily caught by the ear, and that the public of the Music Halls tolerates the words for the sake of the music. There is undoubtedly a certain truth expressed in this view. But the main question remains unaffected by it. What is to be said of the popular taste which, under any circumstances or for any reason, tolerates the words at all?

A great portion of the very thin, attenuated, and all but imperceptible "fun" of the comic songs of the present day, or at least of such of them as flourish at the Music Halls, consists in calling women "feminines," or "female women." To take a walk with a "feminine" on a Sunday, or to be jilted by a "false feminine," and to relieve the misfortune by "gin," or a flirtation with a "new feminine," or to steal down the area of a gentleman's house to visit a "feminine," or a "female woman," who acts as cook, and to be regaled by her on the cold beef and mutton of her master, until the alarm is raised that the "missus" is coming, when the visitor is safely stowed away in the coal-cellar until the danger of discovery is past; these are the telling hits at the Music Halls, if the Music Hall song-books tell the truth. Of course the policeman does not escape caricature when any little incident of this kind is to be described; though if the comic song-books are to be believed, not only policemen, but mechanics, linen-draper's assistants, and merchants' or lawyers' clerks, are just as fond of the cook's mutton, as the policeman, and just as ready to descend to low manœuvres and mean arts to get a share of it. It is not that this picture of the unmarried portion of the lower stratum of the youth of the middle class in our age is a true one; but it is the fact, that it should be accepted as true, and laughed at as such, that shows the deplorable vitiation of the popular taste of London.

Anyone who enjoys such literary offal as we here describe, may find it at the Music Halls, where one performer earns his thousand or fifteen hundred pounds a year, and rides in his brougham from one place to another, singing the same song eight or ten times in the evening, to new and delighted audiences. Or if our investigator recoil from such haunts, he may read comic song-books, closely protected by a copyright that will not permit the infringement or piracy of anything so valuable—and so ignoble. Extracts from the song-books lie before us; but we cannot in justice to our readers, degrade these pages by presenting any more specimens of that combination of stupidity and vulgarity in their most offensive form which produces the Music-Hall literature of the present day. Let it be enough to say, that the three extracts already given are perfectly fair samples by which to estimate all the rest.

The all but worn-out saying of the nameless friend of Fletcher of Saltoun, who, in the days before newspapers, declared that he would rather be the song-writer than the lawgiver of the people, has a side to it that its first utterer never imagined; for if the song-writers of the people are of the class that provide the Music Halls with their "fun" and their morality, the administrators of the law, if not the law-makers, are likely to have extra work. When the song-writer teaches virtue, celebrates true love, exalts patriotism, and has no ridicule to throw except at the harmless follies and small vices of the people, he is a power in the state. When he reverses the process, sneers at virtue, ridicules the great and the heroic in character, and borrows, as his choicest vehicles of expression, the language of burglars and beggars, he also becomes a power in the state, but a power for evil. The greater the popularity which he achieves, the more certain the mischief he causes. The question is a large one—too large for adequate discussion here. All that needs to be said on the subject is, that he who would thoroughly understand the present sordid and dirty vulgarity of our great cities, should dip into the literature of the Music Halls. The study will not be pleasant, but may prove to be instructive. The English were said, by the old French chronicler, to amuse themselves sadly; and anything sadder, in every sense of the word, than the comic songs that are popular in London in the year 1868 is difficult to imagine. There is no escaping the conclusion that the taste of a large

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mass of our countrymen is, in respect to some of the chief amusements which please them, steadily on the decline. This is a serious national matter; and as such we call attention to it in these pages.

THE BATTLE OF THE VAL-DES-DUNES

I. THE FELONIE.

NEARLY eight hundred and twenty-one years ago, in the course of a struggle two centuries long, there occurred an event whose immense importance has scarcely been appreciated by the generality of students. Its consequences, however, were as decisive as its circumstances were interesting and dramatic. Normandy was near losing her Duke and England her Conqueror. It is one of the greatest "Ifs" of history. If the Barons *had* stamped out the lad of twenty, what would have been Britannia's history from that time to this? The facts of the case are given by M. l'Abbé Le Cointe, Curé of Cintheaux, in a complete and conscientious "Notice,"* the leading points of which we reproduce for the benefit of our fellow countrymen.

Twelve years after the death of Robert the First, Duke of Normandy, surnamed the Liberal, his son and successor, William the Bastard, had just entered his twentieth year, when a conspiracy got up by the Barons of Lower Normandy, at the instigation of Guy, of Burgundy, nearly cost him his duchy and his life. This Guy, the second son of his father's sister, and consequently his own cousin-germain, had been brought as a child to the boy duke's court, and treated with brotherly affection. As Guy grew up, William made him a knight, and gave him in fief the Châteaux of Vernon and Brionne, besides broad lands surrounding them. He was only nursing a serpent to sting him afterwards. Puffed up with his recent elevation, Guy's only thought was to acquire still higher rank without troubling his conscience as to the means.

William, although so young, was devoted to the duties of his station. A child of eight when he succeeded to his father, he nevertheless, Guillaume de Poitiers tells us, grew fast in intelligence and personal prowess. "Gaul had not another cavalier so renowned as he. As he excelled in beauty when clad in princely habiliments, so also in his warlike equipment he appeared to singular advantage. He zealously set to work to protect God's churches, to defend the cause of the weak, to establish equitable laws, to pronounce judgments in accordance with justice and moderation, and, above all, to stop murders, fires, and pillage; for unlawful things then enjoyed the extreme of licence. Finally he withdrew his countenance from those whom he found incapable or perverse; he followed sage counsel, resisted foreign foes, and enacted from his own people all due obedience."

* E. Le Gost—Clérisse, Editeur, Caen.

The feudal lords did not want so strict a master; they preferred making endless warfare amongst themselves. Guy, therefore, had no difficulty in hatching a revolt—with four leaders especially already disposed to it; namely, Grimoult du Plessis, Hamon-aux-Dents or Hamon with the Teeth, Néel of Saint Sauveur, and Renouf, Viscount of the Bassin. He easily convinced them that their only chance was to get rid of the intrusive and troublesome young duke.

"What legitimate pretensions had William to the Duchy of Normandy? Was he not a bastard, and consequently without right? Robert's real heir was himself, Guy, the son of Adelise, good Duke Richard's daughter. *His* mother (Guy's) was a lawful wife; William's, a concubine, a Falaise furrier's daughter. Yet this was the fellow they accepted for their master! Would they not shake off so degrading a yoke? The Duchy of Normandy was legally *his* property. If they would support him and do him justice, he would repay their services with rich domains." Arguments of this kind told so well that they swore to depose their tyrant, by force or treachery.

William, meanwhile, ignorant of the plot, had gone to his Château of Valognes, to settle business and enjoy the pleasures of the chase. He thus went into the heart of his enemies' country with no other protection than his usual attendants. It was a betrayal of himself into the hands of his foes. The opportunity being too good to be lost, the conspirators resolved to profit by it. Néel, Renouf, Grimoult, and Hamon the Toothy, proceeded at once to the environs of Valognes, to carry out their project concocted at Bayeux.

One evening, when his visitors had departed, and the duke was left alone with his household, the traitor barons and their accomplices put on their coats of mail and girded their swords beneath their outer garment. That done, they sprung into their saddles and galloped off to the ducal residence. It would be easy to surprise William, without warning or challenge, and to put him to death.

By good luck, there slept that night in the stables of the hotel, where the barons prepared for their attack, a fool of Bayeux, Gallet by name, between whom and William there was a strong attachment. He amused the duke with his sallies; the duke gave him his cast-off clothes. The fool, who had already fallen asleep, was awakened by the noise of men and horses. Cautiously peeping out, he beheld every one in arms. Sure of discovering "some great piece of news," he listened. There was talk of surprising and killing William. Trembling for his dear duke's life and shouldering a stake as his only weapon, he ran off to the château, which he reached about midnight. All was silent. The frequenters of the court were gone, the people on service fast asleep. William also was in bed, "but I don't know," says an old romancer, "if he slept."

Gallet rattled on the doors with repeated

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blows. "Open! open!" he shouted with all his might. "The enemy are coming forthwith to slay you. Fly!"

Once inside the castle, he ran about with desperate cries. "Up, caitiffs! Up with you, ye wretched men! You will be all made into mince-meat. Fly!" He then ran up-stairs and reached the duke's door, beating the wall with his stake and incessantly shouting, "Where liest thou, Willame? Wherefore sleepest thou? Thine enemies are arming; if they reach thee, thou wilt not see the morning. Ah, poor Willame, what art thou about? Th' art dismembered, dead, if thou flee not. Doubt it not; I saw them arming. Get up, fair friend. Quick! Flee, lest thou be caught!"

The duke, alarmed, jumped out of bed, crossed himself, and in shirt and trousers, without hose or shoes, hastily threw on a short riding cloak. Then, girding on his sword, he hurried to the courtyard, mounted a strong and spirited horse which a terrified chamberlain presented, and disappeared in the shadows of night. Scarcely had he left the château, when the sound of cavalry reached his ear. It was the troop of traitors coming to murder him.

The conspirators soon entered the castle. They searched every hole and corner, and found their prey had escaped—a dangerous situation for them. The duke was now their implacable enemy, and would turn upon them relentlessly. Beaten by him, they would be sure to lose every inch of ground they possessed in Normandy. Taken prisoners, they might expect the punishment of felons and traitors to their suzerain lord—an ignominious gibbet. Red with rage, and making a desperate dash, "To horse! to horse!" they furiously shouted. "Death to the bastard! Let every man on our side do his utmost to catch him!" Putting spurs to their steeds, they galloped off in search of the duke.

Meanwhile, William fled alone, as fast as his horse could carry him, in the direction of the fords of the Vire. The night was calm and fine, with brilliant moonlight. Before daybreak, the fugitive had traversed the Vire at low water, by Saint Clement's ford, near Isigny. On passing the church he recommended himself to God, praying to be taken under his holy protection and to be saved from his enemies. After safely crossing the Vire, where the rising tide would have offered an insurmountable obstacle to his progress, he began to take breath. He thought of his unhappy fate and gave free course to the grief that oppressed him. "Ever since he lost his father, his life had been one continued struggle. Danger had followed danger without truce or interval. Was he soon to see the end of his misfortunes? Would God take pity on his lot?"

But there was no time to lose; he must choose his route. Unable to reckon on Bayeux, he resolved to avoid it, following the coast by the road which still bears his name, "La Voie-le-Duc," the Duke's Way. When he reached the village of Ryes the morning was already far advanced.

The lord of the manor of Ryes, Hubert by name, was a brave knight, a wise vavasseur,* a man of honour if ever there was one. He was on his way to hear mass when William, unable to avoid him, met him full butt. He recognised the duke, but could hardly believe his eyes, beholding him unshod, unattended, exhausted, scarcely able to keep his seat on a horse whose sides were streaming with sweat and blood.

"Sire," he said, raising his hands to heaven, "What is this? Why are you wandering thus alone? Hide nothing from me; confide in me. I will save you, as if it were my own proper body."

The duke at once told him all, knowing him to be loyal, and adding, "I have not yet escaped; my enemies are following me, I know full well. If they catch me, I am a dead man. Much need have I therefore of your aid."

"Deus! Sainte Marie!" Hubert exclaimed. "There is not a moment to be lost. Enter, fair lord; I will give you a troop to conduct and guard you."

"Friend of God, five hundred thanks!" cried William, his hopes reviving at his vassal's zeal.

After offering some slight refreshment, Hubert brought another horse, leading it himself by the bridle. He called his own three sons, and ordered them to start as soon as they had girded on their swords. Then, pointing to the duke, he said, "See here your lord, whom perjured traitors are trying to kill. Watch over his safety; let no harm reach him through your fault. If great danger threaten, sacrifice yourselves for him; if needs be, give yourselves in exchange. While you have life defend him, that he be not slain in your hands."

The sons bowed and joyfully promised. Hubert told them the route they were to follow, travelling by by-paths and avoiding populous towns; then, seeing that all was ready, "Fair children, mount!" he said. "Straight to Falaise!"

The castle-gate opened, and the four gallant coursers galloped across country without meeting an obstacle, until they reached the banks of the Orne. They crossed the river at the ford of Foupendant† below Harcourt, between Croisilles and Thiesménil, and soon, all gleeful, reached Falaise. At the news of the danger the duke had incurred, there was great mourning throughout the town. According to Benoit's quaint account, "five hundred good Falaisian faces were moist."

After William's departure, Hubert de Ryes anxiously waited for what was to follow. Standing on his drawbridge, he kept a sharp lookout. Soon there came a troop of cavaliers, whose horses appeared exhausted with fatigue.

* A vassal under a vassal.

† Fago pendente, the hanging beech, the beechwood slope.

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They were the assailants who had been pursuing the duke all night. Hubert knew them well as soon as he caught sight of them. Drawing nigh, they hurriedly asked, "By your faith, have you seen William pass this way? Conceal nothing, and beware of lies."

"What William do you mean?"

"The bastard, the haughty duke."

"Certainly; he can't be far off. But why? What is the matter now?"

"Come with us, and we will tell you. Meanwhile, do as we do."

"With all my heart. I should like nothing better than to lower the pride of the insolent bastard. Wait a minute; I will be your guide. If we catch him, par ma foi, I am the first to strike him, if I can, as you will see."

So saying, he jumped on horseback, and started with them in the direction opposite to that taken by William. Leading them more and more astray, he set them rambling about the country until, seeing their horses thoroughly worn out, he declared with an air of great vexation, that the bastard must doubtless have followed another path. At which they took their leave, thanking him for his zeal, and making the best of their way to Bayeux. It was noon when Hubert re-entered his castle of Ryes.

II. THE PUNISHMENT.

William, well aware that he could not, single-handed, repress so formidable a revolt, put Falaise and its castle in a state of defence; and, accompanied by his uncle Mauger, Archbishop of Rouen, sought Henri the First, King of France, at the royal residence of Poisy, near Paris.

"Sire," he said, "I have henceforth confidence in nothing except God and you. All my people are in revolt against me. They pay me no homage, they have taken my land, they ravage and burn all my domains, and I shall soon have nothing left. Dear sire, you ought not to abandon me. My father made me your man, when he started for the Holy Land; your man I am in Normandy; surely you should defend me. My father once restored France to you. When your mother, Constance, tried to disinherit you, you came to Normandy with a feeble escort. He recognised your seigneuralty, received you with great honour, supplied your wants, and helped you to have the whole of France. Now give me, I pray you and request, recompense of this service. Come with me to Normandy, and avenge me of the disloyal traitors who have sworn my death. If you consent, you will do me much good, and I shall be your liege-man all my life long."

Henri was touched by the young duke's misfortunes. Twelve years ago he had sworn to act as his guardian and parent; he now kept his word. He hastily assembled "all the grand armies of France." At the beginning of August, 1047, he took up his position on the little river Laizon, between Argences and Mézidon in Normandy, at the head of at least ten thousand men. William diligently recruited troops in all the districts remaining faithful to him. With this army he encamped at Argences, on the river Muance, about a couple of leagues from the King of France's army.

On the other hand, the revolted barons had not been idle. As soon as they heard of Henri's promise to help the duke, they were aware that their only hope of safety lay in a bold and desperate resistance. Leaving their castles unprotected, they armed every man at their disposal, young and old, and summoned all the vavasseurs who owed them service in time of war. Before long, their united troops, followed by bands of villains armed with clubs and iron-tipped sticks (because they had not the right to fight with swords) passed the river Orne, thirty thousand strong, and proudly advanced to meet the invading armies, as far as the Val-des-Dunes, a league from Argences. In this strong position, lance in hand, the insurgents awaited the hour of battle.

To the south-east of Caen, between the two roads which lead one to Paris the other to Palaise, there stretches a large triangular plain. About the middle of this plain, a rising ground swells into the little hill of Saint-Laurence (which is eight miles from Caen), attaining its highest elevation at Secqueville, forming a horseshoe from the north to the west, and then gently sinking towards the south. The valley formed by the sweep of the hills had derived from its stony and sandy soil, and especially from its configuration and its sterility around Saint-Laurence's hill, the characteristic name of "the Dunes," from the Celtic word "dun," an elevation. Seen from the heights of Saint-Laurence and Secqueville, it bears a resemblance to the open hull of a very broad-built ship. In spite of modern attempts to plant Scotch firs, an old description still applies to it. "There are no groves or thickets. Hard is the earth, without marshy ground."

Such was the position taken up by the barons. With the hill of Saint-Laurence at their back, their left flank covered by the marshes of Chichehoville, their right protected by the heights of Secqueville, they had certainly a great advantage over the Franco-Norman army. Even at an epoch when there were no projectile weapons to speak of, the situation was well chosen for a battle—with one great inconvenience, however; the barons were under the necessity of winning. No retreat was open to them. Caen held for the duke; to the south-west were the rapid waters of the Orne. But they felt strong in their courage and superior numbers. At that time strategy went for nothing; brute force was everything.

On the morning of the 10th of August, 1047, the French army, making a movement in advance, passed Airan and occupied Valmeray,

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a village situated on the river Muance. While the French knights were preparing for battle, donning their helmets, fitting their coats of mail, and equipping their horses, Henri entered the little church and remained during the mass sung in his behalf. The clerks and choristers trembled with fear, expecting every moment that the enemy, whom they knew to be at hand, would pour down upon them. When the King of France, devoutly kneeling, had recommended himself to God's protection, mounting on horseback, he gave the signal to march on the Val-des-Dunes, determined not to spare his own person in the rude shock he was about to encounter.

At the same time, William and his Normans, encamped at Argences, prepared to effect their junction with the French army. At a very early hour the duke was amongst his troops, giving orders. When all was arranged, his arms were brought him. Making the sign of the cross, he put on his helmet. Then he girded on his sword, presented by a varlet. A chamberlain brought his trusty steed, on which he caracoled before his admiring squadrons. For William was the handsomest cavalier of his day, six (French) feet high, of herculean strength, with an expressive countenance and invincible courage. "Never was there seen so fine a man," says Benoit—"so genteel, so well-made, so completely furnished, that by the side of him handsome men looked ugly."

While Henri and William, each wielding a baton, were arranging their troops at the entrance of the Val-des-Dunes, they beheld a magnificent squadron of a hundred and forty cavaliers approaching, with a richly-clad seigneur at their head. Henri anxiously regarded the corps, not knowing whether they were friends or foes. Struck with their rich costume and their manly beauty, he turned to the duke and asked, "Who are these, with ladies' tokens on their lances? Are they enemies? Costly is their apparel; wisely and well they hold themselves. One thing I clearly see—that victory will be with those whom they help with their swords. They will not be found among the vanquished. Do you know anything of their intentions?"

"Sire," said William, "I believe that they all will side with me. The sire who commands them is Raoul Taisson. Never in my life have I had dispute with him, nor done him wrong or villany. He is a very honourable man, and will be a great help if he aid us. Please God that he may!"

Raoul Taisson was the Seigneur of Cinglais. So great was the extent of his domains that the saying ran, "Out of every three feet of land, two belonged to him." The surname Taisson had been given to him because, like the badger (in old French "taxo"), he could go to earth wherever he went. The rebel barons had induced him to come to Bayeux, and there, by force of entreaties and promises, had contrived to get him to join their party. Before leaving them, he had even sworn over the relics of saints that he would be the very first to smite William in battle, as soon as, and in whatever place, he found him. Now, however, when he saw the standard with the golden leopards supporting the cross of Normandy, he called to mind the homage he had done to the duke in the presence of his father and his baronage. Perhaps, also, on beholding the long lines of the Franco-Norman army, he began to doubt of the success of the enterprise in which he had suffered himself to be entangled.

However that may be, leaving his followers, who awaited him motionless with lances erect, he spurred his horse forward, and then, brandishing his spear and uttering his war-cry, "Thury!"* rode straight up to the duke, struck him on the shoulder twice with his glove, and said to him, smiling, "Sire, the oath I have taken is now fulfilled. I have sworn to strike you as soon as I met with you; I have done so, not choosing to be guilty of perjury.† Do not be angry, sire; I will commit no other felony. If I have stricken you with my glove, I will thrust my sword-blade through a hundred of your enemies. Reckon upon me and mine."

"Vostre merci; thanks be to you!" said William, reassured and laughing with delight. Raoul galloped back to his troop of knights. With them he kept prudently aloof from the fray, until the time should come to side with those whom he had resolved to assist.

It was about nine in the morning when the two armies met. The weather being bright and fine, each adversary could easily count the other's strength. All at once the plain re-echoed with war-shouts. "Montjoie! Montjoie!" cried the French, delighted to hear the sound of their own voices. "Dex aie! Dex aie!"‡ responded William's soldiers. "Saint Sauveur!" "Saint Sever!" "Saint Amand!" shouted the troops of Néel, Renouf, and Hamon of the Teeth. After this hoarse defiant prelude thousands of lances were fixed in their rests. The cavaliers, leaning forwards, their heads being protected by helmets of steel, spurred their horses and swept over the plain. The earth shook beneath this mass of cavalry rushing along at full gallop.

Soon, however, sharper and shriller sounds succeeded to the horses' heavy tread; there was the clashing of arms, the shivering of lances, the blows showered on helmet and shield. There gradually arose a dull screaming noise, as amongst pebbles rolling on a shingly shore, when a retreating wave dashes them one against the other. This was the real din of battle, the voice of an obstinate and bloody fight,

* Thury-Harcourt, the chief place in Taisson's domains.

† Taisson's reasoning reminds us of the warrior bishop who, hesitating to slay his enemies with the sword, for fear of disobeying the holy canons, simply knocked them on the head with clubs and cudgels.

‡ Deus or Deux nous aide; God help us.

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fought with equal courage on either side, with the same resolution to conquer or die. Along a front a couple of miles in length, there was a continual rush of squadrons charging with rage or forming again to repeat their onslaught. Many were the bloody coats of mail; many the broken swords and battered helmets; many the warriors who fell never more to rise.

How William, the gentle, the preux, surpassed all others; how brave Néel multiplied himself when his squadrons were tottering under the adversaries' shock; how a knight, who was never known and whose name is not found in any book, unhorsed the king; how Henri remounted without contusion or wound; how Hamon of the Teeth was taken up dead, while the most valiant of his knights perished with him; how the young Duke of Normandy. by slaying Hardré, gave the finishing stroke which decided the battle; how the routed troops, in their efforts to escape, rushed into water twenty feet deep; how the heaped-up corpses choked the stream, until the water-mills were stopped and the river ran red with blood as far as Caen, we leave the ancient chroniclers to relate at length.

When the slaughter came to an end at last, the king and the duke, transported with joy, returned from the pursuit to the Val-des-Dunes and divided the immense booty which they found heaped together. Neither of them was above taking his share of the profits. They then set about removing the wounded and burying the dead; after which Henri, without further delay, led back his army to France, William betaking himself to Rouen.

The insurrection was crushed. By natural selection William took the lead, surviving this struggle for power and life by the same sustaining and repressive force which makes the wild bull lord of the herd. Weak arms, lax muscles easily tired, unsteady sitters in their saddles, were speedily put out of the way, leaving no lineal descendant behind them. The Franco-Normans, the better butchers, enjoyed the butchers' privilege of turning to account their fellow-creatures' deaths.

Néel fled to Britany, as the beaten animal retreats to the wilderness. All his domains were confiscated, though he was graciouly pardoned some years afterwards. In 1054, he had certainly recovered the heritage of his fathers. Guy shut himself up in his Château of Brionne, where William very soon besieged him. Forced to capitulate, his life was spared and he retired into Burgundy. Grimoult de Plessis, delivered up to the conqueror, was thrown into prison in Rouen. Accused of being the principal author of the conspiracy, he was found strangled in gaol the very day when he was to justify himself by a judicial duel. They buried him in his irons. His castle was demolished by the duke's order, and the barony of Plessis with all its dependencies was given to the cathedral of Bayeux, and not to "Madame Sainte Marie of Rouen," as Benoit erroneously relates. Certain of the rebel lords the duke exiled, or put to death, causing their castles to be razed; others obtained their pardon. Renouf was amongst the latter. But what matters it to the master bison what becomes of the rivals whom he has gored and driven off, so long as he founds a dynasty reigning by the grace of God and the right of the strongest?

THE LATE MISS HOLLINGFORD.

CHAPTER IX.

The winter was passing away at this time, and spring days were beginning to shine. I walked out of my bedroom into the bright March world, and saw the primroses laughing in the hollows. I thought my heart broke outright when I heard the first lark begin to sing. After that things went still further wrong. John came to take me out for a drive one day, and I would not go. I could not go. And the Tyrrells were staying at the hall.

Whether it was that Rachel shunned me of her own wish, or because she saw that I had learned to despise her, I do not know; but we kept apart. My poor soul was quite adrift. Anguish for the past, disgust at the present, terror of the future, all weighed on it. If I had known of any convent of saintly nuns, such as I had read of in poems and legends, who took the weary in at their door and healed the sick, who would have preached to me, prayed with me, let me sit at their feet and weep at their knees till I had struggled through this dark phase of my life, I would have got up and fled to them in the night, and left no trace behind me.

I hated to stay at the hall, and yet I stayed. Mr. Hill—kind heart!—said he would bar the gates, and set on the dogs if I attempted to move. He and his wife both fancied at this time to make a pet of me. I had been ill in their house, and I must get well in their house. They would warrant to make the time pleasant. So the Tyrrells were bidden to come and stay a month. Grace Tyrrell arrived with her high spirits, her frivolity, her odour of the world, took me in her hands, and placed herself at once between me and Rachel. She found me weak, irritable, woe-begone. She questioned, petted, coaxed. Partly through curiosity, and partly through good-nature, she tried to win my confidence, and in an evil hour I told her all my trouble. I listened to her censure, scoffs, counsels, and my heart turned to steel against John.

She was older than I by five or six years. I was a good little simple babe, she said, but she, she knew the world. It was only in story-books, or by younglings like me that lovers were expected to be true. Miss Leonard was an "old flame," and, if all that was said might be true, would be heiress of Hillsbro'. Yes, yes, she knew I need not blaze out. I had

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made myself a hero, as simple hearts do, but my idol was clay all the same. Wealth and power would do for John Hollingford what his father's misconduct had undone. It was utter silliness, my abasing myself, saying that Rachel Leonard was more loveable than I. Her rich expectations were her superior charm. Oh me! how people will talk, just to be thought knowing, just to be thought wise, just to dazzle, and to create an excitement for the hour.

I do think that Grace Tyrrell loved me after her own fashion, and that she thought I had been hardly used; but the sympathy she gave me was a weak sympathy that loved to spend itself in words, that was curious to sift out the matter of my grief, that laid little wiles to prove the judgment she had given me true. She had watched them (Rachel and John), she said, and John's manner was not the manner of a lover, though he affected it as much as he could. He was trying to bind her with promises, but she would not be bound. Yes, she, Grace, had watched them, and would watch them. Every night she brought me into her room, and detailed her observations of the day, and pitied, and petted, and caressed her poor darling. I was weak in health, and unutterably lonely and sad, and I clung to her protection and kindness. But instinctively I distrusted her judgment. I disliked her coarse views of things, and followed her counsels doubtingly.

I have not described her to you yet, my children. Imagine, then, a showy, frivolous-looking, blonde young woman, fond of pretty feathers, and flowers, and gay colours; pretty enough in her way, good-humoured and talkative.

I thought, then, that I had every reason to be grateful to her, and I blamed myself for not loving her spontaneously, as I had loved, as I still fought against loving Rachel. I think now that I had no reason to be grateful to her. If she had not been always by my side, so faithful, so watchful, so never-failing with her worldly lesson, I think I should have found a way out of the darkness of my trouble. I think I should have softened a little when Rachel met me in the gallery, twined her soft arm round my neck, and asked me why we two should be so estranged. I think I should have wept when John took my hand between his two and asked me, in God's name, to tell him why I had grown so altered. But I was blind, deaf, and dumb to their advances. Their reproaches were meaningless, their caresses treacherous, and I would have none of them. I would stand where they themselves had placed me, but I would draw no nearer to set their consciences at rest. And then there was Captain Tyrrell at the hall.

Why did Grace Tyrrell want me to marry her brother? I do not know; unless because she liked me, for she was fond of him; unless because my substantial dowry would be of use to the needy man of fashion. I had heard before that he had made two unsuccessful attempts to marry an heiress. I was not an heiress, but the hand that I should give to a husband would lie pretty well filled. At all events, he was ever by my side, and Grace (I am now sure) helped him to contrive that it should be so. I did not like him, I never had liked him. Before I had come to Hillsbro' he had wearied me with compliments and attentions. When he had visited me at the farm, elegant as he was, I had contrasted him unfavourably with the absent "ploughman," wondering that language had only provided one word, "man," by which to designate two creatures so different. He was the same now that he had been then; but I, who had soared to things higher, had fallen. Any one was useful to talk to, to walk with, to drive with, so that time might pass; any noise, any bustle, that would keep me from thinking, was grateful. So I tolerated the attention of Captain Tyrrell, and he and Grace hemmed me in between them. Rachel looked on in silence, sometimes with contempt, sometimes with wondering pity. John kept further and further aloof, and his face got darker, and sadder, and sterner to me. And this it was that bewildered and chafed me more than anything I had suffered yet. Why, since he had turned his back upon me, would he keep constantly looking over his shoulder? And, oh me! how Grace did whisper; and how her whispers fired me with pride, while the confidence I had foolishly given her daily wore away my womanly self-respect.

My children, you will wonder why I did not behave heroically under this trial. You despise a heroine who is subject to the most common faults and failings. The old woman now can look back and mark out a better course of conduct for the girl. But the girl is gone—the past is past, the life is lived. I was full of the humours and delusions of nineteen years, and I saw the glory and delight of my youth wrecked. Existence was merely inextricable confusion in the dark. I never dreamt of a path appearing, of a return of sunshine, of a story like this to be afterwards told.

Rachel's conduct was variable and strange to me at this time. She kept aloof from me, as I have told you, looking on at my poor little frantic efforts to be careless with a grand contempt. She watched me as closely as Grace watched her; but one day, I know not how it happened, some word of jealous misery escaped me, and Rachel grew very white and silent, and there was a long pause of days before either of them addressed the other again; but Rachel's look and manner was altered to me from that moment. A long, tender, wistful gaze followed me about. She did not venture to dispute Grace Tyrrell's possession of me, but it made her uneasy. She was observant and sad, patient and kind, while my manner to her was often irritable and repellant. One night she stole into my room when I was sinking to sleep, and bent over me in my bed. "My darling, my sister!" she said, "let me kiss you, let me put

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my arms round you. Oh! why will you always turn away from me?"

I did not answer, except by moving my face shudderingly aside.

"Margery," she whispered again, "tell me why you have turned against me and John Hollingford?"

"You and John," said I, opening my eyes and looking at her. "Yes, that is it. You and John. Dear me; am I not grateful to you both? How odd!"

"Margery, shall I swear that you have no reason to be jealous of me."

"Oh no, Rachel," I said; "don't swear. Go away and be happy, as I am, and sleep soundly."

She moved away a step or two, but came back hesitatingly.

"Margery," said she, "I want to tell you—if you will listen to me—I have a great trouble."

"Have you?" said I. "To think of any one having a trouble in this world! I can't believe it."

"But, Margery," she said, putting her hands on my shoulders, and looking down at me, "I have a secret, and I came here to tell it to you, and you must listen, for it concerns you."

"Does it?" said I; "then you had better not trust me with your secret, Rachel. I think I have a wild beast chained up in me somewhere, and it might do you harm. I advise you not to have anything to do with me. Good night."

"Ah!" said she, bitterly, turning away, "was ever any one so changed in so short a time. This is Miss Tyrrell's doing. She is a spy upon me, and yet I defy her to know anything about me. She has filled you with her own cruel prejudice."

"Do not say anything against the Tyrrells in my hearing," I said. "They are the dearest friends I have."

"If that be true," answered Rachel, thoughtfully, "I have nothing more to say. The thing that I was going to tell you does not concern you, and I have been spared a humiliation for the present. When you know all, you can cry out against me with the rest. Remember," she added distinctly with proud bitterness, "I give you full permission."

She turned away and moved across the room; she stopped before the dying fire, standing above it, and looking down into it. I saw her dark figure between me and the fading glare, her head lowered on her breast, her arms hanging dejectedly by her side. She mused there a few minutes, and then went noiselessly out of the room.

CHAPTER X.

Early summer was already upon the land, flowers were blooming, and the reign of sunshine had begun. The cuckoo haunted the hall gardens, rabbits basked in the glades, and the woods were alive with singing birds.

A little thing happened which surprised me. A troop of us were riding one day along the moor, and by the outskirts of the road, I, being foremost, espied two figures at a distance among the trees, and recognising the girls from the farm, I pressed on and came on them unawares, where they were down on their knees, gathering mosses out of the grass. Mopsie was on my neck in a moment, but Jane was a little shy. I had to coax her to be frank.

She thought I must be changed, she said, I stayed away so long. If I cared for them any more, I would have come to see them. Mother was not very well, and John, when at home, was dull. He fretted about something. Did I not know what it was about?

"Whether I come or stay, you must believe in me, Jane," said I; "I am not one of those that change. I will go back with you now and see your mother. Here are the rest of our party coming; we will meet them and tell them what I am going to do."

"That is Miss Leonard," I added, seeing Rachel riding foremost. "Are you not curious to see her. Jane said "yes," and walked on beside me, holding my whip.

The sun was in Rachel's face till she passed into the shade right before us. She raised her eyes then and looked at us, started violently, gave her reins a sudden wild pluck; the horse reared, plunged, and flung her. I screamed and sprang to the ground, but Jane stood immovable, looking at Rachel where she lay, staring at her with a face which had changed from glowing red to white. I pushed her aside to reach Rachel. She turned quickly round, and, without a word, began walking rapidly towards home. She passed out of sight, without once looking back. It all occurred in a minute.

The other riders came up; Rachel was not injured, only a little bruised and faint. She was too nervous to remount. Our party rode home, and I sat with Rachel on the grass, till a servant came with a pony carriage. The man took our horses, and I drove Rachel home. She cried hysterically all the time whilst we waited in the wood. I did not see any more of Jane, and, of course, I did not pay my proposed visit to her mother. Rachel did not attempt to explain the cause of her accident, and I did not ask her anything about it. I remembered Jane's face, and I puzzled over her strange conduct in silence. It was impossible not to think that she had beheld in Rachel some one whom she had not expected, and was not well pleased to see. Yet this young girl had been a child when she had come to Hillsbro', and she had not known Rachel by name. My head ached distressfully over the puzzle, but I could make nothing of it. Jane was an odd girl; she had conceived a prejudice against Miss Leonard, and had taken a whimsically rude way of showing it. This was all the conclusion I could come to on the subject.

One evening we had a dinner party, and a good many young people being present, we

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danced a little. I danced more gaily than the rest, for my heart was unusually sore. Grace Tyrrell had told me that day that she purposed leaving the hall next week, and had pressed me to go with her to London. I thought I had better go, yet I had refused her. I knew I must leave Hillsbro', yet I shrank from the great effort of tearing myself away. Here I had been loved and happy; the trees and the moors knew it; even the strange faces of the country people passing on the roads had seemed to be in my secret, and had played their simple part in my dream. I felt that, once gone, I could never return, and I must first have an explanation with John, and put an end to our engagement. Yet how to seek him for such a purpose? I had kept at such a distance from him lately that it seemed impossible. I felt that he would be relieved by my absence, and glad of his release, but my own woe pressed upon me. I feared to make a fool of myself if he was kind as of old, when we said good-bye.

So I was dancing with the rest, and Captain Tyrrell was my partner. We were very merry. Grace was playing for us, and looked approvingly over her shoulders. John had been with us at dinner, but I had lost sight of him, and as I did not see Rachel either, my fancy saw them walking in the moonlight without. For it was a warm evening, the windows were open, the stars bright, and people went in and out at their pleasure. The flowers smelt sweetly in the dew, and the nightingales were singing. There was a game of hide and seek on the lawn, and when the shrieks and laughter were subsiding, some one began to sing within. Rachel, entertaining the old ladies and gentlemen, and the rovers flocked round the windows to listen. I had sauntered with Captain Tyrrell into a grove to hear a nightingale, and I was weary to death of his company. He was trying to make me promise to go to London. "Oh, let it rest," I said, "we will talk about it to-morrow. Let us be merry to-night. We will play hide and seek again!" and I darted suddenly among the trees, and lay close behind a great oak. My squire lost me; I heard him go past plunging through the underwood, and swearing a little. I lay still till he had given up the search and gone towards the house, and then, like the silly lamb in the spelling-book story, I came forth in the moonlight, and if I did not skip and frisk about with delight, I at least enjoyed myself after the only dismal fashion I could command. Captain Tyrrell was to me, in these days, a veritable old man of the sea. I could not get rid of him, and sometimes I thought in my most despairing moods that it was going to be my lot to carry him on my shoulders for the remainder of my life.

I was walking slowly, musing ruefully, when I saw a figure advancing to meet me on the path. I saw at a glance that it was John Hollingford. The time had been when I would have flown gladly to meet him, linked my arm in his, and seized the opportunity for one of our old talks about pleasant fancies. But this was not the friend I had known, nor was I any longer the simple girl who could open her heart to trust, and delight in shining dreams. The pleasant fancies had been proved cheats, the stars had fallen. I no longer looked up at the sky, but down to the ground. For a moment I shrank back, and would have hidden, but then I thought bitterly, what did it matter? Unpleasant words must be said between us, sooner or later. A very few would suffice. Better they were said at once.

"Margery," said John, "people are looking for you, and talking about you. I have come to fetch you to the house. To tell the truth I am glad of the opportunity of saying something which has been long upon my mind. Will you bear with me a few minutes?"

"Yes," I said, "certainly. As long as he pleased." And I tossed little pieces of twig over my shoulder, and prepared myself to listen. Oh, my dears, how defiant women will be, just for the fear of being pitied.

"You must know very well," he continued, "what I am going to say. I have a right to ask you for an explanation of your conduct for the past few weeks. People are coupling your name with that of Captain Tyrrell, and with good reason. You are so changed that I scarcely see a trace of the Margery I once knew. Child! if you repent of the promise you have given me, tell me now and I will set you free. I remember the circumstances under which that promise was given. You, perhaps, exaggerated your own feelings; you have since renewed your acquaintance with people and ways of life that suit you best. I will try not to blame you. Speak out at once, and do not think of me."

The truthful ring of feeling and reproach in his voice startled my ears, and set my heart struggling for liberty to give an honest response to this appeal. A few simple words would have been enough, but the recollection of all that I knew came back too quickly. The conviction of his insincerity and injustice suddenly bewildered me with anger, keen in proportion to the desolation I had suffered.

"Sir," said I (we said "sir" for politeness in those days, my dear), loftily, coldly, and in utter despair, "I will take you at your word. Let the promise between us be broken from this moment!"

He heaved a great sigh of relief, I thought, and being near the house we parted with much politeness. Thus we put an end to our engagement. Holy and indestructible I had believed it to be; but then I was an ignorant little fool. People shake hands and say good-bye every day, and never dream of being so mad as to spoil to-morrow with tears. As for me I did not wait for to-morrow. That night was piteous with the rain of my grief. But Grace was at hand to comfort, to counsel, to instruct, which she did with her own peculiar figures of speech.

"You are a brave little thing!" she said. "I am glad you had spirit to act on the first notice

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to quit. It would have been so much more humiliating to have waited for a forcible ejectment."

And I promised to accompany her to London.

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. HILL had a pretty little bedizened boudoir, blue silk hangings elegantly festooned with birdcages; couches and divans for its mistress's dogs and cats; with a spare seat for a friend who might venture in at any time for a dish of private chit-chat with the lady of the hall. Into this apartment I was confidentially drawn by Mrs. Hill on the morning after my moonlight conversation with John, as with heavy eyes and hectic cheeks, but with a saucy tongue in reserve, specially sharpened, and a chin held at the extreme angle of self-complacency, and no toleration of interference from others, I was sailing majestically down-stairs to put my melancholy finger as usual into the pie of the pleasures and pastimes of the day.

"Come in, my dear," she said, mysteriously, with her finger to her lip, nodding her little fat face good humouredly at me, and making all her little curls shake. "I think you are a very safe person, my love, and, besides, so fond of Rachel. I would not trouble you with my news only that it is a secret, and a secret is a thing that I never could endure for any length of time without bringing on hysterics. You are not fond of my darlings, I know. There, we will send away the noisiest."

And Mrs. Hill hereupon tumbled some half-dozen fluffy bodies out of the window on to the verandah below, and stood for the next few moments wagging her head and coqueting down at the ill-tempered looking brutes, who whined and scowled their resentment of the disrespectful treatment they had received.

"Ho, my beauties! run, skip, jump!" cried the lady, throwing up her little fat arms. And the dogs, rolling their bodies away into the sun at last, her attention returned to me.

"I must first tell you, my love," said she, drawing a letter from her pocket, and smoothing it open on her knee, "I must first confide to you in strict secresy that our dear Rachel is engaged to be married."

Here the ecstatic fury of the singing-birds reached such a deafening climax that their mistress was obliged to pause in her communication, and to go round the room dropping extinguishers of silk and muslin over the cages. "When the pie was opened the birds began to sing," thought I, the pie being Mrs. Hill's budget, and I had also time to consider that John must have sat up very late last night, or risen very early this morning to have matters already so very happily matured. "I wonder if Grace would mind travelling a day sooner than she named," was the third thought that went whizzing through my head before Mrs. Hill could proceed any further with the news that she had in store for me.

"Yes," said Mrs. Hill, "it is true that we are destined to lose her, and it is very kind and sympathising of you, my dear, to look so miserable. You can readily imagine how I shall suffer—I, who have loved that girl far more than if I had been ten times over her mother." And the little lady wiped her eyes. "I told you, my dear, that the matter is a secret. Old Sir Arthur wants his son to marry another lady, and Arthur Noble cannot marry without his father's consent. But, in the mean time, the children are engaged, hoping for better days. And now there is a letter from the dear fellow saying he will be here this evening. Only I am not to tell Rachel, as he wants to surprise her. You will keep my counsel, Miss Dacre?"

I murmured, "Oh, certainly," but the things in the room were swimming about strangely, and my wits were astray.

"And do you know, my dear (I feel I can trust you thoroughly), do you know I am exceedingly glad of this for many reasons. I have noticed poor young Hollingford! Rachel is an attractive creature, and I fear a little inconsiderate. But the queen of beauty must be excused, my dear, and she is a queen, our Rachel. We cannot help the moths getting round the candle, can we?"

After this I curtseyed, and made my escape as quickly as possible. "Poor young Hollingford! Oh, John, John! why have you brought yourself so low as this?" I cried, across the wood to the farm chimneys.

My children, there is a rambling old garden at the back of the hall, a spot which the sun never leaves. Wild tangles of shadow fall now as then on the paths, from the gnarled branches of moss-eaten apple-trees. In the season of fruit, blushing peaches and plums, yellow and transparent as honey, hung from its ancient lichen-covered walls. Raspberry brambles, borne out of their ranks by the weight of their crimson berries, strayed across the path. There were beehives ranged against the fiery creeper on the far-end wall, and the booming of the bees made a drowsy atmosphere in the place. This, together with the odour of stocks and wall-flowers, was deliciously perceived as soon as your hand lifted the latch of the little green door, and regretfully missed when you closed it behind you.

You know it, my children. I need not tell you that it is a homely retreat compared with the other gardens near, costly, curious, and prim, where the beds are like enormous bouquets dropped on the grass, and the complexion of every flower is suited with that of its neighbour. But this old garden was always a favourite, for its unfailing sunshine, its murmurous repose, and the refreshing fragrance of its old-fashioned odours.

Well, my dears, all day long I stayed in my room, fighting a battle of sorrow and passion, and when evening came I stood at the window and saw the sun go down behind the trees of the old garden. I bethought me of its soothing sights and sounds, and fled away to it, as to a

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sanctuary. There is an arbour under the wall, in the midst of a bed of lilies. I hid myself there, and looked out on the lily-cups brimming with sunset light, on the diving up and down of the birds, on the little golden clouds transfixed in the glory of the heavens. Not a soul breathed within the four high walls but myself, till the latch of the little green door clicked, and who should come hieing along the path but Rachel, her white evening dress tucked to one side, and a watering-pot in her hand. She had a favourite corner in this garden, which it was her pleasure to tend with her own hands. The sun was down, and the plants were thirsting. Rachel was kind to all: kind to the daisies and me, kind to John, kind to her betrothed, Arthur Noble (I had not failed to pick up the name), who was coming this evening to surprise her. When and in what corner would the kindness end and cruelty begin? Watching through a rent screen of tangled flowers, the fair shapely figure flitting and swaying in the after-glory of the sunset, I wondered about it all. How would she act when her other lover arrived? Would she turn her face, in which lived such pathetic truth, first on one, and then on the other? Would she for a time give a hand in the dark to each, lacking courage to fling love for ever over her shoulder, and declare at once for the world? Would she honestly dismiss John, confessing that she had chosen her path? or would she bravely destroy that which was unholy, and give her hand to him before the world? Contemplating this possibility, I felt my heart swell with something that was not selfishness; and I built a palace in the air for John.

Having done so, I heard the garden door click again, and starting, looked, expecting to see John coming in to take possession of his palace on the instant. A man came in, but he was a stranger. He took first one path, and then another, and glanced about him with eyes unused to the place. Here, then, was Arthur Noble, arrived. He passed along the path below the lily-bed, and I saw him well. He was a fine-looking fellow, sunburnt, like one who had seen foreign service, and handsome: physically handsomer than John, I could see, with more of the dash of gallantry and air of the grand gentleman, but with less of that something I have hinted at before, soul-spirituality—what shall I call it, my dears, to escape being smiled at? You have known John Hollingford, and you will recognise the charm that I mean, something that—sick, or afflicted, or disfigured, or aged—must always make him loveable, and attract the pure of heart to his side.

Well, Arthur Noble was of a different stamp. How he would have looked out of the sunshine of prosperity, I do not know; but he seemed made to be gilt by it from head to foot. He had a pleasant face, sunny and frank, a high-bred, masterful air, and an amiable courtly manner. Physically he had all the fine points of a Saxon hero, fair hair, blue eyes, powerful frame. Yet gay, and debonnair, and happy as he looked, I pitied him a little, going past to find Rachel. A little, not a great deal, for I judged him (wrongly, as it afterwards proved), to be one who would love lightly, and be easily consoled by a world whose darling he must be.

I saw their meeting, and John's aërial palace crumbled away into dust. There was no mistaking Rachel's face, the glow that transfigured it when she turned by chance and saw the figure advancing towards her. She sprang to meet him with hands extended, gown tucked aside as it was, and visibly flying feet; and he, striding on, opened his arms to receive her, and folded them reverently about her, like a true knight embracing his bride.

"And what about John?" I said, angrily, as I watched the two walking up and down between the roses, talking as eagerly and joyously as if they had just received a charter for perpetual happiness.

That was a dull evening for some of us at the hall. Rachel and her betrothed sat apart and talked. Grace played chess with Mr. Hill, and, to escape from Captain Tyrrell, I kept close to Mrs. Hill.

"I am quite in a dilemma, my dear," she whispered to me. "There is young Hollingford, who has been coming about the hall so much, and will be coming about; and then here is Arthur Noble; and you know, my dear, or perhaps you do not know, that there has been a deadly feud between their fathers. They were once friends; but poor Mr. Hollingford—you know all about him, and Sir Arthur Noble was a heavy loser. Sir Arthur is very vindictive, I must say. I do not think his son is of the same temper, but it might be unpleasant, their meeting. Mr. Hill, who is quite bewitched about young Hollingford, will say, 'Pooh, pooh! let the lads meet and be friends;' but I am not at all so sure that there will not be an awkwardness. I declare I am quite at my wits' end."

I professed myself unable to give advice on this subject; and, indeed, I felt that I ought now to regard myself as a dying person, who has no further concern with the interests and people around me. I saw a reason why John Hollingford and Mr. Noble were not likely to be friends, even if their fathers had been brothers. And the little lady's petty grievance worried me. And all things troubled me, for in three days I was to leave Hillsbro' for London with the Tyrrells.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

No. 471.] SATURDAY, MAY 2, 1868. [PRICE 2d.

THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

CHAPTER VI.

(1.) "MISS CLACK presents her compliments to Mr. Franklin Blake; and, in sending him the fifth chapter of her humble narrative, begs to say that she feels quite unequal to enlarge as she could wish on an event so awful, under the circumstances, as Lady Verinder's death. She has, therefore, attached to her own manuscript copious Extracts from precious publications in her possession, all bearing on this terrible subject. And may those Extracts (Miss Clack fervently hopes) sound as the blast of a trumpet in the ears of her respected kinsman, Mr. Franklin Blake."

(2.) "Mr. Franklin Blake presents his compliments to Miss Clack, and begs to thank her for the fifth chapter of her narrative. In returning the extracts sent with it, he will refrain from mentioning any personal objection which he may entertain to this species of literature, and will merely say that the proposed additions to the manuscript are not necessary to the fulfilment of the purpose that he has in view."

(3.) "Miss Clack begs to acknowledge the return of her Extracts. She affectionately reminds Mr. Franklin Blake that she is a Christian, and that it is, therefore, quite impossible for him to offend her. Miss C. persists in feeling the deepest interest in Mr. Blake, and pledges herself, on the first occasion when sickness may lay him low, to offer him the use of her Extracts for the second time. In the meanwhile she would be glad to know, before beginning the next and last chapter of her narrative, whether she may be permitted to make her humble contribution complete by availing herself of the light which later discoveries have thrown on the mystery of the Moonstone."

(4.) "Mr. Franklin Blake is sorry to disappoint Miss Clack. He can only repeat the instructions which he had the honour of giving her when she began her narrative. She is requested to limit herself to her own individual experience of persons and events, as recorded in her Diary. Later discoveries she will be good enough to leave to the pens of those persons who can write in the capacity of actual witnesses."

(5.) "Miss Clack is extremely sorry to trouble Mr. Franklin Blake with another letter. Her Extracts have been returned, and the expression of her matured views on the subject of the Moonstone has been forbidden. Miss Clack is painfully conscious that she ought (in the worldly phrase) to feel herself put down. But, no—Miss C. has learnt Perseverance in the School of Adversity. Her object in writing is to know whether Mr. Blake (who prohibits everything else) prohibits the appearance of the present correspondence in Miss Clack's narrative? Some explanation of the position in which Mr. Blake's interference has placed her as an authoress, seems due on the ground of common justice. And Miss Clack, on her side, is most anxious that her letters should be produced to speak for themselves."

(6.) "Mr. Franklin Blake agrees to Miss Clack's proposal, on the understanding that she will kindly consider this intimation of his consent as closing the correspondence between them."

(7.) "Miss Clack feels it an act of Christian duty (before the correspondence closes) to inform Mr. Franklin Blake that his last letter—evidently intended to offend her—has not succeeded in accomplishing the object of the writer. She affectionately requests Mr. Blake to retire to the privacy of his own room, and to consider with himself whether the training which can thus elevate a poor weak woman above the reach of insult, be not worthy of greater admiration than he is now disposed to feel for it. On being favoured with an intimation to that effect, Miss C. solemnly pledges herself to send back the complete series of her Extracts to Mr. Franklin Blake."

[To this letter no answer was received. Comment is needless.

(Signed) DRUSILLA CLACK.]

CHAPTER VII.

THE foregoing correspondence will sufficiently explain why no choice is left me but to pass over Lady Verinder's death with the simple announcement of the fact which ends my fifth chapter.

Keeping myself for the future strictly within

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the limits of my own personal experience, I have next to relate that a month elapsed from the time of my aunt's decease before Rachel Verinder and I met again. That meeting was the occasion of my spending a few days under the same roof with her. In the course of my visit, something happened, relating to her marriage-engagement with Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite, which is important enough to require special notice in these pages. When this last of many painful family circumstances has been disclosed, my task will be completed; for I shall then have told all that I know, as an actual (and most unwilling) witness of events.

My aunt's remains were removed from London, and were buried in the little cemetery attached to the church in her own park. I was invited to the funeral with the rest of the family. But it was impossible (with my religious views) to rouse myself in a few days only from the shock which this death had caused me. I was informed, moreover, that the rector of Frizinghall was to read the service. Having myself in past times seen this clerical castaway making one of the players at Lady Verinder's whist-table, I doubt, even if I had been fit to travel, whether I should have felt justified in attending the ceremony.

Lady Verinder's death left her daughter under the care of her brother-in-law, Mr. Ablewhite the elder. He was appointed guardian by the will, until his niece married, or came of age. Under those circumstances, Mr. Godfrey informed his father, I suppose, of the new relation in which he stood towards Rachel. At any rate, in ten days from my aunt's death, the secret of the marriage engagement was no secret at all within the circle of the family, and the grand question for Mr. Ablewhite senior—another confirmed castaway!—was how to make himself and his authority most agreeable to the wealthy young lady who was going to marry his son.

Rachel gave him some trouble, at the outset, about the choice of a place in which she could be prevailed upon to reside. The house in Montagu Square was associated with the calamity of her mother's death. The house in Yorkshire was associated with the scandalous affair of the lost Moonstone. Her guardian's own residence at Frizinghall was open to neither of these objections. But Rachel's presence in it, after her recent bereavement, operated as a check on the gaieties of her cousins, the Miss Ablewhites—and she herself requested that her visit might be deferred to a more favourable opportunity. It ended in a proposal, emanating from old Mr. Ablewhite, to try a furnished house at Brighton. His wife, an invalid daughter, and Rachel were to inhabit it together, and were to expect him to join them later in the season. They would see no society but a few old friends, and they would have his son Godfrey, travelling backwards and forwards by the London train, always at their disposal.

I describe this aimless flitting about from one place of residence to another—this insatiate restlessness of body and appalling stagnation of soul—merely with a view to arriving at results. The event which (under Providence) proved to be the means of bringing Rachel Verinder and myself together again, was no other than the hiring of the house at Brighton.

My Aunt Ablewhite is a large, silent, fair-complexioned woman, with one noteworthy point in her character. From the hour of her birth she has never been known to do anything for herself. She has gone through life, accepting everybody's help, and adopting everybody's opinions. A more hopeless person, in a spiritual point of view, I have never met with—there is absolutely, in this perplexing case, no obstructive material to work upon. Aunt Ablewhite would listen to the Grand Lama of Thibet exactly as she listens to Me, and would reflect his views quite as readily as she reflects mine. She found the furnished house at Brighton by stopping at an hotel in London, composing herself on a sofa, and sending for her son. She discovered the necessary servants by breakfasting in bed one morning (still at the hotel), and giving her maid a holiday on condition that the girl "would begin enjoying herself by fetching Miss Clack." I found her placidly fanning herself in her dressing-gown at eleven o'clock. "Drusilla, dear, I want some servants. You are so clever—please get them for me." I looked round the untidy room. The church bells were going for a week-day service; they suggested a word of affectionate remonstrance on my part. "Oh, aunt!" I said, sadly, "is *this* worthy of a Christian Englishwoman? Is the passage from time to eternity to be made in *this* manner?" My aunt answered, "I'll put on my gown, Drusilla, if you will be kind enough to help me." What was to be said, after that? I have done wonders with murderesses—I have never advanced an inch with Aunt Ablewhite. "Where is the list," I asked, "of the servants whom you require?" My aunt shook her head; she hadn't even energy enough to keep the list. "Rachel has got it, dear," she said, "in the next room." I went into the next room, and so saw Rachel again, for the first time since we had parted in Montagu Square.

She looked pitiably small and thin in her deep mourning. If I attached any serious importance to such a perishable trifle as personal appearance, I might be inclined to add that hers was one of those unfortunate complexions which always suffer when not relieved by a border of white next the skin. But what are our complexions and our looks? Hindrances and pitfalls, dear girls, which beset us on our way to higher things! Greatly to my surprise, Rachel rose when I entered the room, and came forward to meet me with outstretched hand.

"I am glad to see you," she said. "Drusilla, I have been in the habit of speaking very foolishly and very rudely to you, on former occasions. I beg your pardon. I hope you will forgive me."

My face, I suppose, betrayed the astonish-

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ment I felt at this. She coloured up for a moment, and then proceeded to explain herself.

"In my poor mother's lifetime," she went on, "her friends were not always my friends, too. Now I have lost her, my heart turns for comfort to the people she liked. She liked you. Try to be friends with me, Drusilla, if you can."

To any rightly-constituted mind, the motive thus acknowledged was simply shocking. Here in Christian England was a young woman in a state of bereavement, with so little idea of where to look for true comfort, that she actually expected to find it among her mother's friends! Here was a relative of mine, awakened to a sense of her shortcomings towards others, under the influence, not of conviction and duty, but of sentiment and impulse! Most deplorable to think of—but, still, suggestive of something hopeful, to a person of my experience in plying the good work. There could be no harm, I thought, in ascertaining the extent of the change which the loss of her mother had wrought in Rachel's character. I decided, as a useful test, to probe her on the subject of her marriage engagement to Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.

Having first met her advances with all possible cordiality, I sat by her on the sofa, at her own request. We discussed family affairs and future plans—always excepting that one future plan which was to end in her marriage. Try as I might to turn the conversation that way, she resolutely declined to take the hint. Any open reference to the question, on my part, would have been premature at this early stage of our reconciliation. Besides, I had discovered all I wanted to know. She was no longer the reckless, defiant creature whom I had heard and seen, on the occasion of my martyrdom in Montagu Square. This was, of itself, enough to encourage me to take her conversion in hand—beginning with a few words of earnest warning directed against the hasty formation of the marriage tie, and so getting on to higher things. Looking at her, now, with this new interest—and calling to mind the headlong suddenness with which she had met Mr. Godfrey's matrimonial views—I felt the solemn duty of interfering, with a fervour which assured me that I should achieve no common results. Rapidity of proceeding was, as I believed, of importance in this case. I went back at once to the question of the servants wanted for the furnished house.

"Where is the list, dear?"

Rachel produced it.

"Cook, kitchen-maid, housemaid, and footman," I read. "My dear Rachel, these servants are only wanted for a term—the term during which your guardian has taken the house. We shall have great difficulty in finding persons of character and capacity to accept a temporary engagement of that sort, if we try in London. Has the house at Brighton been found yet?"

"Yes. Godfrey has taken it; and persons in the house wanted him to hire them as servants. He thought they would hardly do for *us*, and came back having settled nothing."

"And you have no experience yourself in these matters, Rachel?"

"None whatever."

"And Aunt Ablewhite won't exert herself?"

"No, poor dear. Don't blame her, Drusilla. I think she is the only really happy woman I have ever met with."

"There are degrees in happiness, darling. We must have a little talk, some day, on that subject. In the mean time, I will undertake to meet the difficulty about the servants. Your aunt will write a letter to the people of the house——"

"She will sign a letter, if I write it for her, which comes to the same thing."

"Quite the same thing. I shall get the letter, and I will go to Brighton to-morrow."

"How extremely kind of you! We will join you as soon as you are ready for us. And you will stay, I hope, as *my* guest. Brighton is so lively; you are sure to enjoy it."

In those words the invitation was given, and the glorious prospect of interference was opened before me.

It was then the middle of the week. By Saturday afternoon the house was ready for them. In that short interval I had sifted, not the characters only, but the religious views as well, of all the disengaged servants who applied to me, and had succeeded in making a selection which my conscience approved. I also discovered, and called on, two serious friends of mine, residents in the town, to whom I knew I could confide the pious object which had brought me to Brighton. One of them—a clerical friend—kindly helped me to take sittings for our little party in the church in which he himself ministered. The other—a single lady, like myself—placed the resources of her library (composed throughout of precious publications) entirely at my disposal. I borrowed half-a-dozen works, all carefully chosen with a view to Rachel. When these had been judiciously distributed in the various rooms she would be likely to occupy, I considered that my preparations were complete. Sound doctrine in the servants who waited on her; sound doctrine in the minister who preached to her; sound doctrine in the books that lay on her table—such was the triple welcome which my zeal had prepared for the motherless girl! A heavenly composure filled my mind, on that Saturday afternoon, as I sat at the window waiting the arrival of my relatives. The giddy throng passed and repassed before my eyes. Alas! how many of them felt my exquisite sense of duty done? An awful question. Let us not pursue it.

Between six and seven the travellers arrived. To my indescribable surprise, they were escorted, not by Mr. Godfrey (as I had anticipated), but by the lawyer, Mr. Bruff.

"How do you do, Miss Clack," he said. "I mean to stay, this time."

That reference to the occasion on which I had obliged him to postpone his business to mine, when we were both visiting in Montagu Square, satisfied me that the old worldling had

come to Brighton with some object of his own in view. I had prepared quite a little Paradise for my beloved Rachel—and here was the Serpent already!

"Godfrey was very much vexed, Drusilla, not to be able to come with us," said my Aunt Ablewhite. "There was something in the way which kept him in town. Mr. Bruff volunteered to take his place, and make a holiday of it till Monday morning. By-the-by, Mr. Bruff, I'm ordered to take exercise, and I don't like it. That," added Aunt Ablewhite, pointing out of window to an invalid going by in a chair on wheels, drawn by a man, "is my idea of exercise. If it's air you want, you get it in your chair. And if it's fatigue you want, I'm sure it's fatiguing enough to look at the man."

Rachel stood silent, at a window by herself, with her eyes fixed on the sea.

"Tired, love?" I inquired.

"No. Only a little out of spirits," she answered. "I have often seen the sea, on our Yorkshire coast, with that light on it. And I was thinking, Drusilla, of the days that can never come again."

Mr. Bruff remained to dinner, and stayed through the evening. The more I saw of him, the more certain I felt that he had some private end to serve in coming to Brighton. I watched him carefully. He maintained the same appearance of ease, and talked the same godless gossip, hour after hour, until it was time to take leave. As he shook hands with Rachel, I caught his hard and cunning eye resting on her for a moment with a very peculiar interest and attention. She was plainly concerned in the object that he had in view. He said nothing out of the common to her or to any one, on leaving. He invited himself to luncheon the next day, and then he went away to his hotel.

It was impossible, the next morning, to get my Aunt Ablewhite out of her dressing-gown in time for church. Her invalid daughter (suffering from nothing, in my opinion, but incurable laziness, inherited from her mother) announced that she meant to remain in bed for the day. Rachel and I went alone together to church. A magnificent sermon was preached by my gifted friend, on the heathen indifference of the world to the sinfulness of little sins. For more than an hour his eloquence (assisted by his glorious voice) thundered through the sacred edifice. I said to Rachel, when we came out, "Has it found its way to your heart, dear?" And she answered, "No; it has only made my head ache." This might have been discouraging to some people. But, once embarked on a career of manifest usefulness, nothing discourages Me.

We found Aunt Ablewhite and Mr. Bruff at luncheon. When Rachel declined eating anything, and gave as a reason for it that she was suffering from a headache, the lawyer's cunning instantly saw, and seized, the chance that she had given him.

"There is only one remedy for a headache," said this horrible old man. "A walk, Miss Rachel, is the thing to cure you. I am entirely at your service, if you will honour me by accepting my arm."

"With the greatest pleasure. A walk is the very thing I was longing for."

"It's past two," I gently suggested. "And the afternoon service, Rachel, begins at three."

"How can you expect me to go to church again," she asked petulantly, "with such a headache as mine?"

Mr. Bruff officiously opened the door for her. In a minute more, they were both out of the house. I don't know when I have felt the solemn duty of interfering so strongly as I felt it at that moment. But what was to be done? Nothing was to be done but to interfere, at the first opportunity, later in the day.

On my return from the afternoon service, I found that they had just got back. One look at them told me that the lawyer had said what he wanted to say. I had never before seen Rachel so silent and so thoughtful. I had never before seen Mr. Bruff pay her such devoted attention, and look at her with such marked respect. He had (or pretended that he had) an engagement to dinner that day—and he took an early leave of us all; intending to go back to London by the first train the next morning.

"Are you sure of your own resolution?" he said to Rachel at the door.

"Quite sure," she answered—and so they parted.

The moment his back was turned, Rachel withdrew to her own room. She never appeared at dinner. Her maid (the person with the cap-ribbons) was sent down-stairs to announce that her headache had returned. I ran up to her, and made all sorts of sisterly offers through the door. It was locked, and she kept it locked. Plenty of obstructive material to work on, here! I felt greatly cheered and stimulated by her locking the door.

When her cup of tea went up to her the next morning, I followed it in. I sat by her bedside and said a few earnest words. She listened with languid civility. I noticed my serious friend's precious publications huddled together on a table in a corner. Had she chanced to look into them?—I asked. Yes—and they had not interested her. Would she allow me to read a few passages, of the deepest interest, which had probably escaped her eye? No; not now—she had other things to think of. She gave these answers, with her attention apparently absorbed in folding and re-folding the frilling of her nightgown. It was plainly necessary to rouse her by some reference to those worldly interests which she still had at heart.

"Do you know, love," I said, "I had an odd fancy, yesterday, about Mr. Bruff? I thought, when I saw you after your walk with him, that he had been telling you some bad news."

Her fingers dropped from the frilling of her

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nightgown, and her fierce black eyes flashed at me.

"Quite the contrary!" she said. "It was news I was interested in hearing—and I am deeply indebted to Mr. Bruff for telling me of it."

"Yes?" I said, in a tone of gentle interest.

Her fingers went back to the frilling, and she turned her head sullenly away from me. I had been met in this manner, in the course of plying the good work, hundreds of times. She merely stimulated me to try again. In my dauntless zeal for her welfare, I ran the great risk, and openly alluded to her marriage engagement.

"News you were interested in hearing?" I repeated. "I suppose, my dear Rachel, that must be news of Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite?"

She started up in the bed, and turned deadly pale. It was evidently on the tip of her tongue to retort on me with the unbridled insolence of former times. She checked herself—laid her head back on the pillow—considered a minute—and then answered in these remarkable words:

"*I shall never marry Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.*"

It was my turn to start at that.

"What can you possibly mean?" I exclaimed. "The marriage is considered by the whole family as a settled thing."

"Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite is expected here to-day," she said, doggedly. "Wait till he comes—and you will see."

"But my dear Rachel——"

She rang the bell at the head of her bed. The person with the cap-ribbons appeared.

"Penelope! my bath."

Let me give her her due. In the state of my feelings, at that moment, I do sincerely believe that she had hit on the only possible way of forcing me to leave the room. Her bath, I admit, was too much for me.

By the mere worldly mind my position towards Rachel might have been viewed as presenting difficulties of no ordinary kind. I had reckoned on leading her to higher things, by means of a little earnest exhortation on the subject of her marriage. And now, if she was to be believed, no such event as her marriage was to take place at all. But, ah my friends! a working Christian of my experience (with an evangelising prospect before her) takes broader views than these. Supposing Rachel really broke off the marriage, on which the Ablewhites, father and son, counted as a settled thing, what would be the result? It could only end, if she held firm, in an exchanging of hard words and bitter accusations on both sides. And what would be the effect on Rachel, when the stormy interview was over? A salutary moral depression would be the effect. Her pride would be exhausted, her stubbornness would be exhausted, by the resolute resistance which it was in her character to make under the circumstances. She would turn for sympathy to the nearest person who had sympathy to offer. And I was that nearest person—brimful of comfort, charged to overflowing with seasonable and reviving words. Never had the evangelising prospect looked brighter, to *my* eyes, than it looked now.

She came down to breakfast, but she ate nothing, and hardly uttered a word.

After breakfast, she wandered listlessly from room to room—then suddenly roused herself, and opened the piano. The music she selected to play was of the most scandalously profane sort, associated with performances on the stage which it curdles one's blood to think of. It would have been premature to interfere with her at such a time as this. I privately ascertained the hour at which Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite was expected, and then I escaped the music by leaving the house.

Being out alone, I took the opportunity of calling upon my two resident friends. It was an indescribable luxury to find myself indulging in earnest conversation with serious persons. Infinitely encouraged and refreshed, I turned my steps back again to the house, in excellent time to await the arrival of our expected visitor. I entered the dining-room, always empty at that hour of the day—and found myself face to face with Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite!

He made no attempt to fly the place. Quite the contrary. He advanced to meet me with the utmost eagerness.

"Dear Miss Clack, I have been only waiting to see *you!* Chance set me free of my London engagements to-day sooner than I had expected—and I have got here, in consequence, earlier than my appointed time."

Not the slightest embarrassment encumbered his explanation, though this was his first meeting with me after the scene in Montagu Square. He was not aware, it is true, of my having been a witness of that scene. But he knew, on the other hand, that my attendances at the Mothers'-Small-Clothes, and my relations with friends attached to other charities, must have informed me of his shameless neglect of his Ladies and his Poor. And yet there he was before me, in full possession of his charming voice and his irresistible smile!

"Have you seen Rachel yet?" I asked.

He sighed gently, and took me by the hand. I should certainly have snatched my hand away, if the manner in which he gave his answer had not paralysed me with astonishment.

"I have seen Rachel," he said, with perfect tranquillity. "You are aware, dear friend, that she was engaged to me? Well, she has taken a sudden resolution to break the engagement. Reflection has convinced her that she will best consult her welfare and mine by retracting a rash promise, and leaving me free to make some happier choice elsewhere. That is the only reason she will give, and the only answer she will make to every question that I can ask of her."

"What have you done, on your side?" I inquired. "Have you submitted?"

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"Yes," he said, with the most unruffled composure, "I have submitted."

His conduct, under the circumstances, was so utterly inconceivable, that I stood bewildered with my hand in his. It is a piece of rudeness to stare at anybody, and it is an act of indelicacy to stare at a gentleman. I committed both those improprieties. And I said, as if in a dream, "What does it mean?"

"Permit me to tell you," he replied. "And suppose we sit down?"

He led me to a chair. I have an indistinct remembrance that he was very affectionate. I don't think he put his arm round my waist to support me—but I am not sure. I was quite helpless, and his ways with ladies were very endearing. At any rate, we sat down. I can answer for that, if I can answer for nothing more.

OUR INNER SELVES.

The Chinese sword-swallowers at the Paris Exhibition were extraordinary performers in their way, but at this epoch of progress they have soon been distanced. Swallowing a sabre, at present, is nothing. The fashion now is to swallow a lighted lantern and brilliantly illuminate your inner man. You then become a living and walking gas-light; that is all.

It is evident that swallowing a lantern is only one remove in advance of swallowing a sword. Now there happen to be little electric lanterns which give light without burning. They are called Gessler's tubes, and are small glass cylinders, either empty or filled with azote, hydrogen, or carbonic acid gas, through which a voltaic current is made to pass. The tubes become sufficiently luminous to allow you to read printed letters held at several inches distance from them. When this miniature lantern is introduced into a stomach, the skin is transparent enough to permit your seeing the interior of the animal. There is no need for people to live in glass houses, for they are hereby transformed into glass houses themselves. Their domestic secrets are rudely divulged; and Diogenes would be delighted to find that, instead of a mere superficial outside view of his much desiderated honest man, he can now, with the newly-invented lantern, look a person through and through.

The experiment, which may be considered exceedingly curious until something still more strange is started, is only an extended copy of what has been practised in medical art for some years past. For instance, there is the Ophthalmoscope, or Eye-inspector, of the German philosopher Helmholtz, a small instrument by means of which, the interior of the eye being lighted up, it is possible to explore successfully the deepest portions of that intricate organ. Other instruments assist in the examination of divers internal parts of the human body. Not the least remarkable of these inquisitive apparatuses is the Laryngoscope, invented by a German physician named Czermak for the inspection of the respiratory passages and the mechanism which produces the voice.

The vocal organ in man (which Dr. Tyndall truly describes as the most perfect of reed instruments) is placed at the top of the windpipe, the head of which is adjusted for the attachment of certain elastic bands, called "vocal chords," which almost close the aperture. When the air from the lungs is forced through the slit which separates these vocal chords, they are thrown into vibration. By varying their tension, the rate of vibration is varied, and the sound changed in pitch. The sweetness and smoothness of the voice depend on the perfect closure of the slit of the glottis at regular intervals during the vibration.

The vocal chords may be illuminated and viewed in a mirror placed suitably at the back of the mouth. Dr. Tyndall once attempted to project M. Czermak's larynx upon a screen in his lecture-room, but with only partial success. The organ may, however, be viewed directly in the Laryngoscope, its motions, both in singing, speaking, and coughing, being strikingly visible. The roughness of the voice in colds is due, according to the aforesaid Helmholtz (learned in Acoustics), to mucous flocculi, which get into the slit of the glottis, and which are seen by means of the Laryngoscope. The squeaking falsetto voice with which some persons are afflicted, the same Helmholtz thinks may be produced by the drawing aside of the mucous layer which ordinarily lies under and loads the vocal chords. Their edges thus become sharper, and their weight less; while their elasticity remaining the same, they are shaken into more rapid tremors. The promptness and accuracy with which the vocal chords can change their tension, their form, and the width of the slit between them, render the voice the most perfect of musical instruments.

The order of the day, therefore, is that we should be able to see everything, without exception. If we can look an animalcule through and through by means of transmitted light; if, in the same way, we can behold the blood circulating in the tail of a tadpole or the foot of a frog, with all the minute vessels thereto pertaining, why should we not do so with larger animals, with our own proper selves? It is merely a question of degree. With a sufficient intensity of illuminating power, there is no knowing what may not become transparent. And, in fact, a distinguished hygienist, M. Foussagrives, of Montpellier, attempted to render the internal viscera of our body visible by transmitted light. They were to be exhibited to bystanders as animated and most interesting transparencies. M. Brük, a German medical man, followed up the same line of research. Finally, at the Medical Congress of 1867, M. Milliot, a French physician residing at Kiew, gave an approximate solution of the problem.

His Splanchnoscope (or instrument intended to render the viscera externally visible) has

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been tried with success. It is in principle simply a Gessler's tube, or, more strictly speaking, a modification of the apparatus described in special treatises under the title of Mindeldorf's tube. At one of the meetings of the Congress, M. Milliot introduced his lantern into the stomach of a dog by means of an œsophagian probe. Through the skin, thus rendered transparent, the spectators were able to distinguish perfectly the interior of the dog's stomach in all its details. The experiment was tried a second time on the person of a cat; and it has quite recently been repeated in M. Henri de Parville's presence, the scientific collaborateur of the Constitutionnel. M. Milliot has likewise introduced a tube more than a yard in length into a man's œsophagus; and the internal membrane of this deep-seated organ became perfectly distinguishable.

Cui bono? What is the good of all this? is a very natural question to ask. And in truth, its utility is not very apparent. The system of internal lighting up having, however, been invented, its useful application will probably come afterwards. Meanwhile, it will decide whether an absent dressmaker, while thinking where her Highland laddie has gone, has swallowed needles and pins instead of sauce piquante. It may settle the question whether Master Tommy or the cat has emptied all the pots of strawberry jam. At worst, it will be a formidable rival to sword-swallowing and Japanese feats of dexterity. Perhaps even next season's pantomime will give us a "pas brilliant," danced by human glow-worms shining with all their might and main, and followed up by a new edition of the Feast of Lanterns, with effects which no Chinese stage-manager ever dreamt of.

SEED AND HARVEST.

AN HUNGARIAN FABLE.

EVERYWHERE the Turks were overthrown—everywhere the heralds proclaimed the victories of the Magyar arms, and peace, so long sighed for, allowed the conquering heroes to return to their homes. Among them was Janko, the valiant volunteer, who had obtained his discharge, and who came to share with his brothers the family heritage. Swiftly and soon was the matter settled, for the father's estate consisted of a single guilder,* which was to be equally divided among his three sons; and as the portion of each could not be a matter of controversy, Janko found himself in the unmolested possession of twenty kreutzers.†

It was short profit for a long journey—a result of which Janko had little dreamed—for he expected to have returned home to have passed the rest of his days in ease and peace under the roof of his ancestors. Neither for him nor for his brothers was there any better fate than to earn a livelihood by the sweat of their brow; so they determined to separate, and to struggle each for himself, taking their different paths in the wide world that was before them.

The two elder brothers, accustomed from their youth to the labours of the field, found no difficulty in getting employment as husbandmen; but Janko, fond of wandering, and himself of an adventurous spirit—Janko, who had distinguished himself in the battle-field, could not bend down to the vassalage of the soil; he had served his country in the field of honour, he could not demean himself as a hireling to follow the plough over the agricultural field.

In truth he was so annoyed with his position that he repented ever having applied for his discharge. It was idle to mourn over what could not be mended; so he determined to float on the tide of his destiny, and courageously seek his fortune in any path that might be opened to him.

He left his little native village, wandering over field, and hill, and valley, from one place to another. He had not travelled many miles when he found himself close to a convent, into whose chapel doors a crowd of people was streaming. He recollected the words of his departed mother,

> "O turn not from the living God,
> If thou shouldst find him on thy road;"

so he did not hesitate, but joined the worshippers who were entering the church. A monk stood there addressing the multitude. He spoke with potent eloquence, "Do good to your neighbours, wherever and whenever you are able, and for all the good you do, God will recompense you a hundred-fold."

The words penetrated his ear and agitated his soul, he felt that the riddle of his life was solved—the law of his life laid down. He suddenly left the church that no after words might remove the impression which had been made on him.

He had scarcely turned his back upon the convent, and was thoughtfully pursuing his way, when he was met by a poor lame beggar, who humbly asked for alms. Janko put his hand into his pocket and gave the beggar half of his whole inheritance. He received in return a grateful blessing, and went on his way rejoicing.

After journeying for about an hour, he reached a village, where all the people, young and old, were busily occupied with a raffle for a horse that deeply interested the whole community. Nine-and-twenty villagers were gathered in a circle, and they earnestly requested Janko to join them and make the thirtieth, which would complete the number, and take his chance with the rest. The stake was ten kreutzers, each to be represented by a straw, and he who drew the longest straw was to become the possessor of the animal. The ten kreutzers he deposited, and made up the needful number of adventurers. It was the last half of his inheritance, but he remembered the lame beggar's blessing. The lame beggar could not

* About twenty pence.

† About seven and twenty farthings.

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recompense him, but he felt assured the blessing had not been given in vain.

And what happened? When the straws were compared, Janko's was the longest; and, to the astonishment of the villagers, the stranger carried away the horse.

The impressive words of the preacher occurred to him again and again. He thought the promise of the prophecy had been fulfilled in the village. He turned over in his mind a thousand purposes for doing good. The result was that he would devote the whole of his winnings at the raffle to the first benevolent object that might present itself.

He had not proceeded far when he was met by a poor tired gipsy, dragging sadly a cart heavily laden with rusty old iron. Janko sprung from his horse, fastened it to the cart, and told the gipsy that he must consider the beast as his own property. The gipsy could hardly breathe for the thanks and the praises which he poured out on his benefactor, who treated them with unconcern; but he made a walking-stick of a branch which he gathered from a neighbouring tree, and went on his way rejoicing, while ten thousand expressions of gratitude from the gipsy followed his footsteps with prayers that he might be recompensed a thousand-fold.

And thus Janko had not only sacrificed his last penny, but the horse which he might have sold at a profit. He was menaced with hunger, thirst, and exhaustion; yet he did not allow his spirits to be depressed, but supported himself with the conviction that all would be well in the end.

Yet weariness began to overpower him, when he found himself approaching a noble castle, which was surrounded by a beautiful garden bedecked with trees and flowers. There were the finest fruit-trees of every sort which he had ever seen, all laden with the most delicious produce, which caused his mouth to water when he looked towards them. He threw himself down on a plank which lay on the grass, and languished for the arrival of the evening, in whose darkness he might, perhaps, enter the garden unobserved, and refresh himself with the inviting fruit.

The shadows of evening descended, and hills and vales were covered with darkness. Janko climbed over the fence, and mounted the branches of a noble pear-tree, so encumbered with fruit that from the moment he observed it he could not turn away his eye. He comfortably settled himself among the leaves, and ate such a quantity of pears that he found it necessary to unbutton his jacket. Having satisfied his present necessities, he bethought himself of providing for the wants of the coming day; and he filled his pockets and travelling bag with such a quantity of fruit that the bough on which he was sitting began to crack and to give way under the weight of its burden. At this very moment two charming maidens approached him. They brought easy chairs, and seated themselves immediately under the pear-tree. They entered upon the most artless and confidential conversation. One said to the other, "No, no; if I had for a husband such a man as our charming count, I should care little for the pretensions of his cousin, the prelate." "Yes, indeed," answered the other, "the good count deserves a worthier woman. But so it is. Many times I desired to open the eyes of the dear man; but who knows how he would have taken my interference? So it was better I should be silent. I will not fan the fire that burns within me. But tell me——No; we must go. I hear the tramp of horses; the loving couple will soon be here." They rose, went away, and returned to the castle, but left the garden seats behind them. Soon a handsome cavalier appeared in the laurel alley. He approached the abandoned seats, and tied his horse to the bough of a tree. He then went off towards the castle, clapped his hands three times, and from the castle the clapping was echoed back, and brought the answer.

Janko, who had little thought of overhearing these colloquies, was all the more perplexed when he saw a tastefully dressed lady draw near, whom the equestrian embraced in the tenderest manner, and they seated themselves on the stools under the tree.

The stillness of the evening and the favouring darkness, to which the overshadowing branches of the pear-tree contributed, exercised their influence upon the outpourings of two loving souls. Sweeter and softer became the words that passed between them; and so their kisses were less and less audible; and then they slept—slept as if the downy god had waved his fan over them.

Janko, who had listened to all that passed with the greatest attention, could not understand these mysterious proceedings—that the enamoured pair should thus expose themselves to the chillness of the evening air, the dampness of the midnight dew, and the torments of the mosquitos, which in swarms infested the garden; but so it was, and they fell asleep under the pear-tree. He remained for some time, nevertheless; but being determined to disturb their quiet, and feeling the weight of his havresack more and more oppressive, he took courage, and poured out all its contents on the slumberers, so that the soft pears were showered down upon their heads like a thunderstorm. They were frightened as if the heavens had burst above them; they sprang up, and fled heels over head. The prelate left behind him his horse and his hat, and fled from the garden with all possible speed. Janko did not linger long on the pear-tree, but tumbled speedily down, seized the prelate's hat, mounted the horse, and galloped away at full speed.

The night was approaching, and as he did not like to enter an hotel with an empty purse, he continued his ride until he reached an open meadow, where he fastened his steed to a tree, and laid himself down to rest.

Though much disposed to sleep, he still found leisure, even in his dreams, to reckon the

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benefits which might result to him from having possession of the prelate's horse. It occurred to him that the boldest course would be the best, and that if he the very next morning mounted the horse, and, wearing the prelate's hat, presented himself in the neighbourhood of the palace, it was most likely the prelate, or perhaps even the countess, would pay a heavy price for the redemption of their property.

And so at the sunrise he sprang into the saddle, put the hat upon his head, and rode directly towards the palace, in order to parade in the palace court. The count was taking his accustomed morning walk when Janko passed through the long tree-sided alley. He was quite astounded when he recognised the horse and the hat of his highly honoured cousin. He beckoned to the rider, and inquired how he had obtained possession of both.

The crafty fellow, who perceived that matters were proceeding quite according to his wishes, answered very meekly that the history of the manner in which he had become possessed of these his belongings would not be very pleasing to the owner of the castle, and he would rather refrain from narrating matters which concerned somewhat closely the honour of that noble person.

This two-sided answer fell like a lightning flash upon the count, and the remembrance burst upon him of some familiarities of his bride towards her cousin which had awakened suspicion in his mind. He felt disposed to admit the stranger into his confidence, and offered him a large reward if he would communicate all he knew.

Janko, who had already foreseen what was to happen, took advantage of his position, and, after some rather seeming than real hesitation, he narrated what he had witnessed in the count's garden when concealed in the pear-tree, and how he had obtained possession of the noble horse and the hat.

Janko's narrative, so singular and so staggering, was so unanswerable that the count determined, as the wisest course, to put the sinners to open shame. He presented to Janko a handful of gold, desired he would take quarters for himself and his horse at a neighbouring inn, and, after clothing himself in a brilliant uniform which the count promised to send him, that he would present himself at the table an invited guest, as a captain of cavalry, and would there avail himself of an opportunity, which would be given him, of exposing, in an allegorical form, yet so as not possibly to be misunderstood, the infamous doings of two of the company.

Janko bowed compliance, and hastened to the hotel, where he waited the further instructions of the count.

Morning dawned, and one of the count's servants presented himself to Janko, bringing with him a splendid costume, a sabre, and all the belongings of a Hussar officer. The servant bowed respectfully to the stranger, and handed to him the formal invitation of his master.

With becoming care and diligence Janko dressed himself. He wondered at his own stately appearance, and had no conception that it would have been so attractive. The dinner bell struck, and he hastened on his way to the castle.

He was very cordially received by his host, and found himself in the midst of a numerous company, and that a distinguished seat was appointed for him immediately opposite those filled by the prelate and the countess. The rich odours of the food, the noble hospitality, the most warm welcome, and, above all, the influence of the grape-juice with which his glass was instantly replenished, all helped his eloquence, and disposed him to give emphatic utterance to his thoughts. So, after he had amused the guests with histories of the many warlike adventures which he had witnessed in his military life, the count broke in, saying, "Willingly I hear repeated the tales of wars and battles, for in my youth I was familiar with the clang of arms; but now I had rather listen to some love story; and has our brave soldier none such to tell? for these have a character of their own; they interest everybody; and any love story told by a soldier must have a special charm."

The words were scarcely uttered when the wine-inspired guest broke out:

"There lives a count in Hungary,
A rich and noble man is he;
She played him false in marriage life,
That treacherous wife—that treacherous wife!
That treacherous wife, in beauty ripe,
Does she not merit many a stripe?
Why did her beauty go astray?
And why her faithful lord betray?
The noble count went hunting far,
'Neath shining moon and travelling star.
He had a cousin, trusted much,
And could he prove a traitor such?
Do pear-trees in the garden grow?
And are there shady seats below?
And, were they asked a tale to tell,
Could they not answer? Ah! too well!"

Blushes deeper and deeper, hotter and hotter, covered the cheeks of the countess. She hung down her head, and everybody noticed her embarrassment and confusion. Her sturdy neighbour's countenance was disturbed. He looked as if a hard bone had broken his teeth, and covered his face with his hand as if in agony, while Janko continued his love story:

"If pear-trees green, if shady seat,
Refuse to give an answer meet,
Was there not seated in the tree
A lynx-eyed youth? and ask what he
Could tell us of an amorous pair,
Conversing, courting, kissing there!
Find out that youth, and, on his oath,
He'll tell a pretty tale of both."

While the countess endeavoured to conceal her agonised emotions, her heart was heard to beat, and she looked up for an instant full of terror, as if she expected another thunder-storm to burst over her head, like that terrible pelting when the pears fell down from Janko's wallet.

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The fat prelate sat with his forefinger on his nose, covering his mouth as before; but Janko continued:

"Their doom is this: The loving pair
Shall sit upon a donkey bare,
Their faces turned towards his tail;
With hay and straw upon their hair:
And they shall follow in the rear
Of two long-bearded goats, and then
From street to street, with laugh and stare
The crowds shall cry—All hail! All hail!"

The last words had hardly been uttered when shouts of applause rung through the hall; the two sinners uttered their feeble bravos, by which they sought to join in the general enthusiasm, when the count hastily rose—his countenance had assumed a sudden change—and with a loud and solemn voice he thus addressed the company: "I know no appeal against this sentence of condemnation. And I believe that every one of my guests think as I do, that it is most justly merited, and I will now call upon my most chaste bride and my most virtuous cousin, to say what is their verdict upon the evidence?"

The question fell like a thunderbolt upon their conscience, their breath seemed to fail them; but they assumed a sort of heroic indifference, till the countess, as if in innocent simplicity, gently said; "I think the sentence very sensible and very just! Solomon himself could not have spoken more wisely;" and the fat prelate declared he fully concurred in the opinion of the lady.

"'Tis well! 'tis well!" cried the count. "You have pronounced judgment upon yourselves, and no time shall be lost in giving it effect." The tables were turned—the guests were dismissed, the servants had all received instructions from their master. He ordered the donkey and the goats to be brought to the door; they had been kept in waiting till the order should be given for the procession to set out. The sinners stood as if smitten with the palsy, unable to utter a word; a loud bray from the long-eared, and one of the principal actors, announced the opening of the drama. No prayer, no tears availed, the prelate and the countess were seized and mounted upon the ass, and the procession marched away, preceded by a tablet on which Janko's sentence was inscribed in large letters, amidst the jeering and scoffing of an innumerable crowd.

All the arrangements had, indeed, been made by the count before the festival, which was but the beginning of the sentence. The countess was condemned to pass the remainder of her days in a convent; the prelate was banished for ever from his property, which he visited for the last time in order there to receive the ignominious punishment of flogging from the hands of a corporal, after which he was condemned to follow the drum as one of the rank and file of a marching regiment. To his guest Janko, the count presented the handsome dress he had worn at the banquet and a hundred golden ducats as a present, and sent him on his way rejoicing.

And so, with garments and horse, and more money than he had ever before possessed, Janko gratefully took leave of the count, mounted his steed, and went onward in search of other adventures. Fortune had been shining upon him, and he whistled and sang as he rode through forests and over hills, still comforting himself with the hope that the promise of the monk would be fulfilled, and even better luck than that with which he had been favoured might fall to his share.

In the very midst of these reflections, a splendid carriage approached, drawn by four white horses, in which an ancient bishop was seated. As it was only accompanied by an old coachman and one humble attendant, Janko had courage enough to stop the vehicle, and to inquire who was within. The right reverend and his attendants were dreadfully shocked at the appearance of the armed stranger, and still more at the very peremptory way in which the question was put, and the bishop gravely answered, "I am one of God's children." "Indeed!" exclaimed Janko, "the very person I was seeking. You owe to me a thousand horses in performance of a promise made long ago, and as I may have no second opportunity of reminding you of that promise, I will just take your carriage and horses in part payment." This he said with a very stern countenance, upon which the bishop sprung out of the carriage, and with his trembling servants quietly departed, for Janko had placed his right hand on the handle of his sabre, and seemed to threaten their destruction if there was any hesitation in obeying his mandate.

So he tied his horse behind the carriage, seated himself on the box, and went on his way rejoicing. But the thought occurred to him that the bishop, notwithstanding his assumed resignation, might apply to the magistrate in the next village, and cause him to be arrested as a highway robber; so he thought it more prudent to avoid the highway, and through the alleys of the forest to place some distance between them. The forest was very extensive, and after many hours of travel Janko had not got half way through it. In fact, he was a little perplexed, for he did not know his way, and he unexpectedly found himself and his carriage in a morass, deeper and deeper embedded the more he sought to extricate them. The more the horses plunged about the less seemed the chance of their deliverance, and at last neither backwards nor forwards could they move. It seemed to Janko as if he were about to lose all his possessions. Happily, the horse which was behind the carriage was not so thoroughly whelmed in the mud, so Janko managed to get on his back, happy to have the means of getting away, leaving the carriage and its conductors in the morass.

Looking about him with great anxiety, he saw in the wood a herd of swine with their keeper. He thought it would be best to call

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on the herdsman to help him in his perplexing plight; and having released himself, with the assistance of his steed, from the swamp, he rode as fast as he could towards the herdsman; but as he drew nearer and nearer the number of the swine seemed to diminish—he had been deceived by the distance—and at last he found that only three were in the keeping of the man. But he did not concern himself with this, and earnestly entreated the herdsman to lend a hand, with council and deed. The herdsman but stipulated that Janko should, in the mean time, take charge of the swine. "I know," he said, "every spot in the morass, its depth and its shallows, as if I had seen the birth and growth of each. Be not anxious, therefore; I will so safely bring out the horses and carriage that not a spot of dirt shall you see upon either." And then he left Janko, to rescue the unfortunate beasts; but the crafty fellow soon perceived that his three pigs were of far less value than the horses and the carriage, and that he might make a profitable exchange, as he really knew how to find his way through the rushes. So he mounted the box of the carriage and guided the horses safely to a dry side of the bog; but flung his hat into what he knew to be the deepest part, where there was a water eddy. He did this in order to convince the possessor of the despoiled property that he and the horses had been drowned, and that any farther pursuit would be fruitless.

And so he journeyed over hill and dale, while Janko was impatiently expecting his return. He became weary of waiting; and all the more weary when, having gone out of the wood, and looked all around towards the bog, not a sign could he see of carriage, or horse, or herdsman. He lingered for hours, he whistled, he shouted, and at last determined to abandon the pigs, to mount his horse, and to ride to the scene of his misadventure.

Miserable were his feelings, great his alarm when he perceived nothing but the swineherd's hat floating on the water. In many places he could perceive the tracks which the wheels of his carriage had left behind; he followed them as they gradually disappeared, and were wholly lost as they entered the deep water, into which his steed sank down to the saddle-girths. This was indeed a warning—all the more alarming when he saw the hat whirled about by the motion of the eddy, and he lost all heart to pursue his researches further. After many sighs and sorrowings, he began to think of the safety of himself and his steed, and to congratulate himself that he had been able to rescue so much. He turned back, made his way through the recesses of the forest, and reached a heath where there was a little hillock, surrounded by bushes and heather. Upon this hillock he saw a feeble form, which seemed busy in moving from one side to the other, and looked towards him with marked attention.

Approaching her, he found she was a dark-brown gipsy woman, who hastened towards him, weeping and wringing her hands, and implored him to help her in her great need. "Dear, beautiful, golden gentleman!" she cried, while her eyes were steadily fixed upon his costly uniform, "save me from despair, or you will see me perish at your feet from suffering and sorrow. My husband sent me with a sack of jews'-harps which he had got ready for a tradesman in the city, and on which he had received the money. Tired with the sun's heat and the long journey, I went to the well in order to quench my thirst, and while I was bending over the opening my sack unfortunately fell into the water. Woe is me!" she said, weeping—"woe is me! Sure I am that if I do not bring back the sack to my husband it will cost me my life! Help me, golden gentleman! help me! Heaven will reward you a thousand-fold."

Janko, whose own misfortunes disposed him to sympathise more feelingly with the misfortunes of others, determined to lend any possible assistance to the poor supplicating woman. He remembered, too, the promise of the preacher, and was so touched with the tears and entreaties of the gipsy that he dismounted from his horse, and said he was quite ready to help her. The well did not appear very deep, so he undressed himself, gave his uniform, his money, and his steed to the keeping of the woman until he should have rescued the sack, then tied himself to the rope to which the bucket was attached, and lowered himself down into the well.

The water reached up to his throat; but the well was there as high above the water, and it may easily be believed that the ascent was far more difficult than the descent had been. Moreover, the spring was so cold that Janko's teeth began to chatter, and he feared that in a few minutes he might be frozen. Meanwhile he felt about carefully with his feet, to discover the lost bag, and several times he fancied he had reached it; but he could bring up nothing but stones and bones which, from time to time, had fallen into the well. As he could neither find the gipsy's bag, nor bear any longer the cold water, he seized the rope in order to drag himself up to the top. How terrible was his fright when, after he had mounted only a foot or two, the rope suddenly broke, and he fell plump into the icy bath. He cried, he cursed, he howled; but no answer reached his ears. It was the crafty gipsy who had cut the rope in two, had sprung upon his horse, and before Janko had even thought of ascending, had taken flight with garments and gold.

What was he to do in his misery and his abandonment? He struggled against the brick wall with his stiffened limbs, held on as well as he could with hands and feet, but fell again to the bottom. His strength failed him—he had no longer the power of utterance; teeth chattering and groaning were all that remained to him of life.

He lay many hours in this wretched plight, expecting every moment to give up the ghost; and the more forlorn was his condition as the night began to darken over him, and every ray of hope seemed extinguished in his soul.

Just at the moment when he was abandoning himself to despair, he heard the tread of a horse and the rolling of wheels near the mouth of the well. He cried out with all that remained of his nearly extinguished voice. A man answered, and promised to release him. It was a knacker, who was conveying home a dead horse, who charitably came to Janko's deliverance. He let down the rope with which the body had been fastened to the car, into the well, and dragged up the sufferer into the face of day.

Janko first thanked his deliverer with all outpourings of gratitude, and then delivered his cruel betrayer to all the curses of hell, as both his horse and his gold had fled. The curses, indeed, were so violent that they frightened the knacker himself. But when he had told the sad story of his adventure with the gipsy, the knacker was filled with sympathy and pity. He lent his cloak to Janko, and offered to take him into his service. Time was when Janko would have treated with indignation any proposal that he should be the servant of a peasant, but now he thanked heaven that he had saved his skin, and that he found even a horse-knacker to promise him his daily bread. And so, but somewhat sadly, he accepted the proffered cloak of his master, and followed with silent resignation, merely saying, "*As it was won, so it was done.*"

THE ENGLISH GENTLEMAN'S OWN PROFESSION.

(SECOND ARTICLE.)

In a paper lately published in these pages an attempt was made to show the fallibility of the argument, which is sometimes put forward by the partisans of our army purchase system, that it preserves a certain exclusiveness in the military profession, and so helps forward the great object (so extraordinarily dear to some of our countrymen) of keeping the officers' commissions in our army in the hands of gentlemen. The extreme uncertainty of the purchase system as to its action in this respect was contended for, in the article in question, and numerous instances illustrative of that uncertainty were given. Having thus endeavoured to show that this particular object of setting apart the military profession as a service exclusively reserved for gentlemen is not invariably attained by our present regulations with regard to promotion in the army, we come next to the question whether, even supposing that it did so act, the object itself, as pursued, to the exclusion of so many others, is always, and at all hazards, so precious of attainment as a large section of English society believes it to be. That it is desirable that our army should be officered by gentlemen we frankly admit (and we think it likely that, in the main, it always will be so), but what we would ask is, briefly, whether this thing is *so* desirable that everything else is to be sacrificed to it? Whether, in a word, it is as important—or half as important—that the officer who commands our troops should be a finished gentleman, as that he should be a good and experienced soldier? There is nothing in the world to prevent his being both—quite the contrary—but which is the most important?

How is it in other professions? If one of us gets run over in crossing Piccadilly, and the services of an eminent surgeon are required to doctor our broken limbs, is it the most perfect gentleman to be found in the medical profession for whom we inquire, or the most skilful and practised surgeon? When we have got into law difficulties, again—and who can keep out of them?—do we ransack Lincoln's Inn for a solicitor of polished manners, or do we simply ask who is the best authority on matters of this kind, and seek him out forthwith? What we want in all these different callings are able professors in their different ways. We want discreet judges, keen-sighted advocates, careful and astute solicitors, industrious and sensible clergymen, thoughtful and experienced doctors, and the like. We do not go out of our way to insist on their being refined gentlemen. Ordinarily they are so, and immensely it adds to their value; but still we do not make it of paramount importance. We are not such bad architects as to treat a most fascinating ornament as if it were a structural necessity.

But we may go much further than we have done, and still not be in the slightest danger of going too far. It is only asserting the barest truth to say that this assigning to what is a mere accessory, a position of such exaggerated importance is a dangerous as well as a mistaken proceeding. May it not be that a certain amateurish quality which is sometimes to be observed among our officers is attributable in some degree to this military deification of the "genteel?" That this amateur element exists there can be no doubt; and it is just as certain that the idea of getting rid of it is regarded with alarm by those whom it most concerns to send it to the winds. It is but a few evenings ago that the Duke of Argyll, in a memorable speech, spoke contemptuously enough of what he called "professional politicians," and in doing so used an expression, which should never be forgotten, and which told a wondrously long and significant tale. Does not this dread of what is professional, which means what is stirring, energetic, done with a purpose, exist in other natures beside that of the Duke of Argyll? Is there not among many of the "curled darlings" by whom our army is commanded something of the same dread of "professional" officers? Do not a great many of them regard the belonging to a regiment as they do the being members of a club? Is it not in this light, rather than as a profession to be studied, worked at, brought to perfection, that they get to look upon the military calling? Do they not complain of their professional avocations as a bore? Are they not for ever getting somebody else to take their

duty? Do they not take every opportunity of getting out of the uniform which is a badge of their profession? Not wanting in personal courage they are ready enough to fight when occasion offers; but they go into action, as to a fox-hunt, or a tiger-chase, and do their part always very valiantly, and often very stupidly; and this—first, because of that want of interest in war as a business, which has always characterised them—and, next because they have not studied the art of war in the barrack-room, in order that they may make it available on the field of battle.

We cannot know—we have not the means of knowing—all the mischief which comes of this non-professional element among our officers. When we read of grave military mistakes which have been attended with all sorts of ruinous results—of such blunders as the fatal march from *Mhow*, or the Hounslow expedition of more recent days—we do not know how far these and the like disasters may be attributable to this want of practical knowledge of their business by which so many of the officers who have our soldiers in charge are distinguished; we do not know—though we can partly guess—how these guardians of *our* guardians may have been occupied with the odds upon the Chester Cup, or the pigeon match at Battersea, or the prospects of the mare which Captain Jones was to run at the Water Splash steeple chases, when they might, and ought to, have been busy making arrangements for the comfort of the men under their charge, for the well-being of them during the march, and for their comfortable reception at the end of it.

Is it any consolation to us when we hear that such care and provision have been wanting, and that the most culpable neglect of the simplest and commonest precautions has led, as might be expected, to the most disastrous results—is it any consolation to us to be told that the men who were responsible for these blunders were in an eminent degree gentleman-like and well-bred? Does it console us to learn that they were men who knew how to behave in a lady's drawing-room, that they were pleasant inmates in a country house, that their manners at table were unexceptionable, that they had clean hands, and well-kept nails, and nicely fitting garments for all sorts of occasions, with knowledge when to put them on, and how? Excellent qualities all these, no doubt, but not sufficiently so to render us indifferent as to whether the individuals possessing them were, or were not, profoundly and thoroughly imbued with a knowledge of their profession, and interested above all things in the duties which belong to it.

Now let not any reader of these words go away with a false impression of what they are intended to convey, and assert that the object of what is here written is to drag down the position of the British officer, and to fill the army with a set of ill-conditioned snobs. No such thing, the reader may rest assured, is contemplated as either a desirable, or in the least degree probable, result of the abolition of purchase in the army. What we are contending against is simply the assigning undue importance to what is, after all, but one element—and that of secondary importance—in the character of an officer. One gets tired of this perpetually heard boast: "Our officers are gentlemen; the British officer must always be a gentleman." Granted, granted, one feels inclined to say in reply, but why all this fuss about it? Are not men in other professions gentlemen? Are not barristers gentlemen? Are not clergymen, doctors, government employés? Yet these do not attain the different professional positions which they occupy by purchase. Yes, these are gentlemen—at least some of them are, and some of them are not, just as it is, and always must be, in every large collection of men, just as it is in this vaunted profession of arms, even as at present constituted.

The thing which we would plead for is that the army should, in this respect, be allowed to take its chance along with the other occupations in which men engage. Why should even an attempt be made to set apart this fighting business, and exercise a sort of protection over it for the benefit of a special class? Let a good liberal education, in the first place, and an elaborate technical education, in the second, be necessary for the military candidate, as it is for those who would enter on most other callings in which the sons of gentlemen engage. Let this profession be thrown open, as others are, to everybody who can command the means of getting such education and making such preparation. Let its high places be made objects of competition—as other high places are—to be contended for by all who possess ability, and who choose to work. Let merit—the only legitimate ground for promotion in any profession—be the ground for promotion in this. The man who does his work best in civil occupations is the man who succeeds best; let this be so in this military occupation as well.

And, after all, this attempt to put our system of promotion on a different footing would be no such new and startling proceeding as it at first sight appears. It would by no means be a leap in the dark. In our navy—far from the least distinguished of our English "institutions"—such a thing as promotion by purchase is unknown. It is unknown in the artillery and engineers; two of our finest and best organised services. In the navy, doubtless, plenty of complaints are made of the slowness of promotion and of the exercise of favouritism; but this last is, after all, only a corruption which has grown up through neglect and want of supervision, and is no integral part of our system; while the first might be amended, in a great measure, by certain new regulations in connexion with the superannuation of officers, which would be equally to the advantage of the younger branches of the profession, and of the public.

At all events, here are three important ser-

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vices which get on somehow or other without having recourse to the practice of buying and selling posts of the greatest importance. Why are they thus excluded from the general rule which obtains in other branches of our war department? Is it because the control of a ship imposes upon her commanding officer a responsibility so enormous that it is felt there must be no risk of an incompetent person stepping into such a position, because he happens to be able to buy it? Is it, in the case of the other two services mentioned, because great professional skill and technical learning are required in those who are to occupy positions of trust and command? If this should be so—if these should be the reasons, or some of the reasons, why promotion by purchase is unknown in these three fine services, it would supply a stronger and more irresistible argument against the system of buying and selling commissions than any other which could be brought forward.

We have purposely throughout this paper dealt with arguments of a non-professional and untechnical kind, and such as suggest themselves to what is called the general public. We do not pretend to point out *in what way* a new scheme of promotion should be organised. This it would require a long practical and professional acquaintance with military matters to justify any one in attempting to do. What we assume the capacity to do is to show what is the feeling on this subject of a large body of civilians. As to the actual work of preparing fresh rules for the regulating of promotion in our army, the simple natural arrangement seems to be that certain competent persons should be appointed thoroughly to investigate the subject, using every means within their reach of arriving at a true and right decision. Such inquiries, properly conducted, might be attended with the most valuable results; but it would be needful that they should be entered upon in an entirely unprejudiced and liberal spirit, nor must any suggestion which might prove useful, coming from whatever source, be neglected by those to whom the important duty might be confided.

There can hardly be a doubt, for instance, that those to whom such a task might be delegated would do well to examine with some closeness of attention what is the practice of other nations with regard to the internal discipline and organisation of their armies; extracting, as far as may be, what is good from their systems, and rejecting what is bad or unsuitable. Very valuable hints on such points are not hard to get, if we look about for them. Taking, for instance, the question of army promotion, which is just now occupying some degree of public attention, might we not do worse than spend some time in studying the rules by which this is regulated in the different European armies? Such rules are by no means inaccessible; and although no special set of regulations would in all points serve as a guide to us—because each nation has its individuality, and no one among them more unmistakably than our own—yet might we get from some of them certain valuable suggestions which might be of use in our present uncertainty.

Let us—to take an instance—glance for a moment at some of the rules by which promotion is regulated in a service—that of Austria—which still holds, in spite of recent achievements by Prussian needle guns, a high position among European armies. It may be that in English eyes a special value may attach to Austrian arrangements in this kind, because the officers belonging to that service have among us a better reputation for the possession of a gentlemanlike and gallant bearing than is enjoyed by some other of their continental brethren. Let us see, then, how these matters are managed in Austria, and how they contrive to get on without the purchase system, which we have got to regard as so indispensable to the ordering of a well-regulated army.

The earlier regulations contained in the Austrian code relate, of course, entirely to that first preliminary step which enables the youth who desires to embrace a military career to enter the army in the capacity of what they call a cadet.

"No one," say the Austrian rules, "can be nominated for a commission unless he shall have attained the age of eighteen years, and shall have passed the prescribed examination in a satisfactory manner. Certificates of good character and proofs of having received a liberal education will be required from each candidate.

"Cadetships to be in the gift of colonels of regiments. Cadets will take rank, in the regiments to which they are appointed, according to their position in the examination reports."

Here, it will be observed at starting, is an indication of that accordance of a superior position to merit which we all desire should be at the root of advancement in the army, and which it is good to see coming into force at so early a stage in the soldier's career as this. There is no distinct mention in this place of the social class to which these candidates for cadetships are expected to belong, except that furnished by the clause which ordains that they shall be able to give proofs of having received a liberal education. This regulation, of course, limits the class of applicants not a little.

A great readiness to reward exceptional merit appears throughout this code, as witness the next rule:

"Non-commissioned officers and cadets who may have particularly distinguished themselves in the field, may be nominated to sub-lieutenancies without passing the prescribed examination, provided they have received a good education, and their general conduct has been without exception good."

"Out of every four vacancies among the sub-lieutenants in any regiment, the two first are to be filled up from the cadets according to seniority: the third is to be reserved for pupils from the Imperial Schools; the fourth is to be

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at the disposal of the colonel, who may confer it on a cadet without regard to seniority."

Here is more provision for those who have distinguished themselves in a special manner:

"Cadets and officers of all ranks may, for highly distinguished service before the enemy, be selected for promotion. The general commanding an army in the field has a right to make such appointments up to the rank of captain of the first-class. Promotion by selection to higher grades requires the confirmation of the Emperor."

"In time of peace officers cannot attain the rank of captain until they have completed at least four years' service as subalterns."

"Every captain before receiving promotion to the rank of field-officer, must pass an examination, the result of which is to be communicated by the examiners to the commander-in-chief. If a captain shall (during the illness or absence of his superior) have discharged the duties of commanding officer of a battalion for more than four weeks, the examiners are to confine themselves to a decision upon the manner in which such duty has been discharged."

The next two clauses seem very important, providing as they do for a very large class of persons, who are more distinguished by their integrity and good conduct than by the possession of such special abilities as would entitle them to rise to any high position of trust and command. For such as these the different posts which come under the general description of "Local Employ," seem to be admirably well suited.

"Majors, captains, &c., who do not possess the requisite abilities which should entitle them to promotion, but who nevertheless have *claims for long service*, may receive promotion to a higher grade in local employment, receiving the pension of the latter grade, after completing at least two years' service in it."

"'Local Employ' includes, commandantships of local troops; employments under the war department garrison staff; remount establishment (sic); hospital, store, and barrack staff appointments. The number of majors and captains thus nominated to lieutenant-colonelcies and majorities in Local Employ, is fixed as follows:" Here comes a list of the number of such appointments in each branch of the service, which it is unnecessary to give in detail. This matter disposed of, the document before us proceeds, "officers employed in the Imperial Schools of Instruction retain their right to promotion in times of peace and war alike. Non-commissioned officers employed in those establishments are eligible for sub-lieutenancies after six years' good service, provided they can pass the ordinary examination test for cadetships."

The next few regulations relate chiefly to certain restrictions connected with the ages of the officers belonging to the different grades, which seem in the main excellent.

"In the frontier troops and in the artillery," two branches of the service which are probably considered to be of more importance, and to require in the officers who superintend them more of vigour and energy than the others. "In the frontier troops and in the artillery," continues the document from which we quote, "captains of fifty years of age, lieutenant-colonels of fifty-six, and colonels of fifty-eight, are to be considered ineligible for promotion, except in local employ. The maximum age of officers of each grade is fixed as follows: For the active army; subalterns, fifty-four; captains and field-officers, sixty; general officers and field-marshal-lieutenant, sixty-two. For local employ: subalterns, sixty-two; captains, and field-officers, sixty-four; and generals, sixty-six years. Exceptions may be made in certain cases to these rules. A commission, presided over by a general officer, is to report annually on the cases of officers whom it is thus proposed to except. No superannuation limit is laid down in the case of field-marshals."

These age restrictions seem to be valuable in more ways than one, serving not only to secure for the different official posts to which they relate the services of officers in the full vigour of manhood, but also tending, it may be supposed, to counteract that slowness of promotion for which the purchase system is by so many believed to be the only remedy. It is said that in the Austrian army these rules with regard to age have given the most general satisfaction.

There remain one or two more of these laws for the regulation of promotion in the Austrian service, which seem worthy of a passing notice. Among them may be counted the following:

"Officers may be passed over for promotion," have others promoted over their heads, "on the following grounds: First, having been made prisoners of war, according to the result of the court of enquiry on their return." By this is meant probably according to the degree of blame which attaches to them for having been so made prisoners. "Second, their conduct having been made the subject of military or judicial investigation, not wholly exculpatory. Third, not possessing the requisite qualifications for a higher grade."

This last disqualification for promotion would doubtless prove to be surrounded by many difficulties in the working out. Yet one cannot quite see how any system of promotion with which merit should have anything to do could be carried on without some such regulation. Men enter professions every day for which they are not naturally qualified, having drifted into such callings rather than chosen them, and then sticking to their choice simply because they do not see their way to anything else. In no career which men follow under the sun do persons who are misplaced in this way advance to the highest places, and it is certainly not desirable that they should do so in the army. The superseding them, however, must always be a painful proceeding; but this necessary severity may be in some sort modified in the Austrian service by the existence of those situations

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which come under the general denomination of local employ, to some of which these wrong men in the wrong place may doubtless be safely appointed.

One quotation more on the subject of distinguished service promotion:

"Promotion for distinguished service is retained as an imperial prerogative. It is to be solicited only in the case of officers of high rank who have attained the prescribed limits of age, or who are about to retire from the service with permission to retain their rank. They must be among the ten seniors of their grade, and have claims on the score of distinguished merit."

These selections from the Austrian regulations with regard to promotion in the army are given for what they are worth. The system here developed is found to answer in a great European army, and, from this point of view, seems worthy of a certain amount of respect and consideration. Some of its conditions would no doubt prove unsuitable to our English institutions, such as that contained in the second clause of this document, and in which provision is made for the promotion, under certain circumstances, of non-commissioned officers to the rank of sub-lieutenant. To such a rule as this we English people should be very much disposed to demur, and, probably, with reason. The rank and file of our army is composed of a much lower class of men than are to be found in the other European services. This is partly owing, no doubt, to our dispensing, in this country, with the conscription, which obtains for the continental armies the pick of the young men throughout the different countries where it is in force, while we are left to take what we can get in the way of recruits—"what we can get" being too often the very refuse and offscouring of society. At any rate, be the reason what it may, one thing seems certain, that the granting of commissions to non-commissioned officers who have served in the ranks always proves in this country to be more or less of a failure. The man thus elevated is not at ease in the society of his brother-officers, who have had advantages of education and bringing up so widely different from his own. Nor are these last any more at ease with him. Indeed, as far as an outsider can judge from hearsay, not much attempt is made at intimate association in these cases, a sort of mutual feeling existing on both sides that any such attempt would not be likely to lead to satisfactory results.

That greater prizes than are at present within the reach of what we call the "common soldier" should be possible of attainment by him is, on the other hand, a consummation much to be desired, and it is for those who are practically acquainted with such matters to say whether certain military functions of an honourable and lucrative nature might not be set apart as rewards for distinguished services performed by private soldiers and non-commissioned officers. But these offices, supposing such to exist, or to be hereafter brought into existence, should still be for men who do not hold commissions, and should not by any means elevate the individual who should be successful in getting any such post above the social condition of a non-commissioned officer.

With the exception of this particular rule relating to promotion from the ranks, the Austrian document before us seems to contain much that it might be useful for us to consider. It is one specimen, among many others. No doubt similar statements relating to this subject, as published by other nations, might be consulted with equal advantage. Unquestionably we are wonderfully unlike other countries, in nearly all respects; and in consequence of this dissimilarity, it is most difficult for us to adopt any of their practices. Still we do occasionally, in connexion with non-military matters, take hints from without; and there seems to be no particular reason why we should not do so with regard to any such army arrangements as we are constrained to admit are more successfully organised in other nations than in our own.

FITZ-GREENE HALLECK.

The name of this American poet is but little known in the British islands. Very few British readers have read his poems, and fewer still possess them. On his mother's side, Mr. Halleck descended from John Eliot, "the Apostle to the Indians." Born in Connecticut, in 1795, he was brought up amidst the prejudices of his locality and the passions of his neighbours; but in him, as in all the more cultivated men and women of his nation, there is discernible a yearning of the mind, a hankering of the heart, towards the islands of his forefathers.

> We are not parted from the friends we love,
> Because between us rolls the broad salt sea.

Mr. Halleck when eighteen years of age, in 1813, went from Connecticut to New York, working in mercantile and banking-houses until he became the confidential assistant of John Jacob Astor, the wealthy speculator in land. When Mr. Astor died, in 1849, he returned to Connecticut, having become a trustee of the Astor Library. The poems of Mr. Halleck must be viewed as verses written in the leisure, or recreative hours, snatched from business. Versification can be learned only by imitation, and a versifier does not become a poet until he can compose new melodies, and embody in them fresh themes. Most of Mr. Halleck's poems are poetical studies and exercises, by a lover and imitator of the poetry of his day; and this character belongs to all his serious pieces and some of his gayer effusions. His translations show that he never attained a thorough mastery of his art. His Marco Bozzaris is, indeed, a fine poetical exercise, very highly and carefully finished, and admirably suited for declamation; but neither in the music nor in the matter is there any originality. Halleck's genius was

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humorous. In his fragment on Connecticut, there is a picture which could only have been drawn by a humourously observant mind:

'Tis a rough land of earth, and stone, and tree,
Where breathes no castled lord or cabined slave;
Where thoughts, and tongues, and hands are bold and free,
And friends will find a welcome, foes a grave;
And where none kneel, save when to heaven they pray,
Nor even then, unless in their own way.

Theirs is a pure republic, wild yet strong,
A "fierce democracie" where all are true,
To what themselves have voted—right or wrong—
And to their laws denominated blue;
* * * *
A justice of the peace for the time being,
They bow to, but may turn him out next year;
They reverence their priest, but disagreeing
In price of creed, dismiss him without fear;
They have a natural talent for foreseeing
And knowing all things; and should Park appear
From his long tour in Africa, to show
The Niger's source; they'd meet him with—we know.

They love their land because it is their own,
And scorn to give aught other reason why;
Would shake hands with a king upon his throne,
And think it kindness to his majesty;
A stubborn race fearing and flattering none,
Such are they nurtured, such they live and die;
All but a few apostates, who are meddling
With merchandise, pounds, shillings, pence, and peddling;

Or wandering through the southern countries, teaching
The A B C from Webster's spelling-book:
Gallant and godly, making love and preaching,
And gaining, by what they call "hook and crook"
And what the moralists call over-reaching,
A decent living. The Virginians look
Upon them with as favourable eyes
As Gabriel on the devil in Paradise.

But these are but their outcasts. View them near
At home, where all their worth and pride is placed;
And there their hospitable fires burn clear,
And there their lowliest farm-house is graced
With manly hearts, in piety sincere,
Faithful in love, in honour stern and chaste,
In friendship warm and true, in danger brave,
Beloved in life, and sainted in the grave.

There can be little doubt of this being poetry—indebted, however, unquestionably for the form in which it appears to the irresistible example set by "Beppo," and "Don Juan." No inhabitant of Great Britain moreover can think there is anything foreign about the shrewd good folks described. They are just ourselves with more of their own and our own way. In his poem on Alnwick Castle, Mr. Halleck describes one of the castles, none of which are to be seen in his own country, with which the traditions of his ancestors as of ours are associated—for in this our English brotherhood, there have occurred strange ups and downs, and there have been discovered wonderful relationships. I myself knew the last of the Plantagenets as a grave-digger; and I had a friend, the owner of a castle and seven thousand pounds a year, whose heir (unknown to him), was found (ignorant of his heirship) in the backwoods of the Far West. The Connecticut poet hails in Alnwick Castle the

Home of the Percy's highborn race,
Home of their beautiful and brave;
Alike their birth and burial place,
Their cradle and their grave.

"The lion above the castle-gate, the feudal banners above the tower, the warriors in stone, the gentle green hill, the quiet stream, are the features of a spot where Hotspur and his bride Katherine, were seated a thousand years ago." He notices next the ruins of the abbey, with their ivy and roses, the crusader's tomb, the relics of border story, and the lore of centuries since:

the startled bird
First in her twilight slumbers heard
The Norman's curfew bell.

I wandered through the lofty halls
Trod by the Percys of old fame,
And traced upon the chapel walls
Each high heroic name
From him who once his standard set
Where now, o'er mosque and minaret,
Glitter the sultan's crescent moons;
To him who, when a younger son,
Fought for King George at Lexington
A major of dragoons.
* * * *
This last half stanza—it has dashed
From my warm lip the sparkling cup.
The light that o'er my eyebeam flashed,
The power that bore my spirit up
Above this bank-note world, is gone;
And Alnwick's but a market-town,
And this, alas! its market-day,
And beasts and borderers throng the way;
Oxen and bleating lambs in lots,
Northumbrian boors and plaided Scots,
Men in the coal and cattle line;
From Teviots bard and hero land,
From Royal Berwick's beach of sand,
From Wooller, Morpeth, Hexham, and
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

These are not the romantic times
So beautiful in Spenser's rhymes,
So dazzling to the dreaming boy;
Ours are the days of fact, not fable,
Of knights, but not of the Round Table,
Of Bailie Jarvie, not Rob Roy:
'Tis what our "President" Monroe
Has called "the era of good feeling;"
The Highlander, the bitterest foe
To modern laws, has felt their blow,
Consented to be taxed, and vote,
And put on pantaloons and coat,
And leave off cattle-stealing.

Lord Stafford mines for coal and salt,
The Duke of Norfolk deals in malt,

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The Douglas in red herrings;
And noble name and cultured land,
Palace and park, and vassal band,
Are powerless to the notes of hand
Of Rothschild or the Barings.

* * * *

You'll ask if yet the Percy lives
In the armed pomp of feudal state?
The present representatives
Of Hotspur and his "gentle Kate"
Are some half-dozen serving men
In the drab coat of William Penn;
A chambermaid, whose lip and eye,
And cheek and brown hair bright and curling,
Spoke nature's aristocracy;
And one, half groom, half seneschal,
Who bowed me through court, bower, and hall,
From donjon keep to turret wall,
For ten and sixpence sterling.

The society of the author of these lines the reader will readily believe was much sought, for his amusing anecdotes and humorous conversation. In the memoirs of Washington Irving some glimpses are given of the society in which Irving and Halleck met and mingled.

THE LATE MISS HOLLINGFORD.

CHAPTER XII.

The next morning I set off for a solitary walk to the farm. I was going to ask of Mrs. Hollingford formal permission for my visit to London, and to say good-bye to her and the girls. I cried sadly to myself walking over the happy moor and through the wood. I felt unutterably lonely and woebegone. I was going to part from my only friends, and the separation was at hand. I knew that Mrs. Hollingford would blame me, and I felt it hardly worth my while to defend myself. I had quarrelled with John, and broken our engagement. I was going to London with gayer friends. Everything was against me; all the wrong seemed mine. I knew that the dear old lady would say little, only look sad and disappointed, thinking in her heart that things were turning out as she had prophesied; would give me full permission to go where I pleased, and do what I pleased; would kiss and bless me; and then I should have the wide world before me.

It was a radiant May day. A saint has said that "peace is the tranquillity of order;" and such a peace brooded over the happy farm as I crossed its sunny meadows, heard the bleating of its lambs, the lowing of its kine, met its labourers coming and going. An idler was piping somewhere in the fields, the rooks were cawing, the leaves on the boughs just winked in the breeze, the hall door lay open as usual. I did not see a soul about, and I walked in without summoning any one. I opened the parlour door; the place smelt of May and myrtle, and there were fresh roses in the jars, but there was no one there. No one in the kitchen, dairy, still-room; the maids were abroad this glorious noon. I went up-stairs, looking for a face in vain till I came to our school-room. There was Jane alone, sitting at the table over some books, her head between her hands, her hair thrust back from her face, looking older and paler and thinner since I had seen her; a stern, sad-looking young student, with her back to the sun that burned upon the lattice.

Her face turned scarlet when she saw me, and then became paler than before. She gave me her hand coldly, as if she would rather have held it by her side. Her mother was out, she said; had gone to visit at a poor house where there was death and trouble, and would not be home till evening. Mopsie had taken the dogs for a ramble. Then we both sat down and were silent, and Jane's eyes wandered over everything in the room, but would not meet mine.

"I am going to London, Jane," I said, "and I came to bid you good-bye."

"I know," she said. "John told me." And she blushed again fiercely. "I am very glad. I have thought for a long time that London was the place that would suit you best. I knew you would soon tire of the farm."

"I have not tired of the farm," I said, "but the farm has tired of me."

She glanced up amazed, then smiled bitterly, and turned aside her head without speaking, as if such utter nonsense could not be thought worthy of an answer.

"However," I added, "I did not come here to talk about that——"

"No," she interrupted, hastily, "it is not worth your while to make any pretence to us. We do not expect to have friends; we never thought of it till you came. In time we shall get used to the curse our father left upon us."

"Jane, Jane," I said, angrily, "how can you be so wicked?"

"How can I help being wicked?" she asked. "I heard that it was prophesied of us that we should all turn out badly, because ill conduct runs in the blood."

"You do not deserve to have such a mother," I said.

"Oh! my mother!" she said, in an altered tone. "But she has given all her sweetness to Mopsie, and—to John," she added, with an effort, a tear starting in her eye. "But I am my father's daughter. She would cure me too, if she knew of my badness; but she is a saint, and thinks no evil. I work hard at my books, and she calls me a good industrious girl. I will never pour out my bitterness on her. But if my father were here I would let him know what he has done."

The hopeless hardness of her young voice smote me with pain, but I could think of nothing to say to her. I felt that she thought I had been false to John, and that her sympathy for him had stirred all the latent bitterness of her nature.

"And how is the young lady at the hall?" she asked, suddenly

"Do you mean Miss Leonard?" I said.

"Oh, yes—Miss Leonard," said Jane, dropping her eyes on the floor with a strange look.

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"Very well," I answered, thinking of the jubilee that was going on at the hall.

"There is more wickedness in the world than mine," said Jane, still frowning at the carpet. "She is false, and you are false—every one is false. I only know of two grand souls in the world—my mother and John. But the wicked ones will prosper, see if they don't—those who are gay and charming, at least. Bad ones go down like a stone, and lie at the bottom."

At this moment an eager treble voice was heard on the stairs, and the next Mopsie and I were crying, with our heads together, on the lobby.

"Oh, Margery, Margery!" sobbed the little one—"dear, darling, *sweet* Margery! why are you going away? You promised you would always stay. Oh, oh, Margery!"

An hour passed before I could tear myself away from the child. Jane prepared luncheon, which was not eaten; but she did not attempt to share in our sorrow and caresses. When I turned from the door Mopsie was prostrate, weeping on the mat; and Jane was standing upright in the doorway, straight, stern, and pale. So I went sorrowing back to the hall. And I had not seen Mrs. Hollingford.

Had I seen her that day, had her errand of mercy not taken her away from her home and kept her away while I stayed, the whole current of my life and of the lives of others might have been changed. She would then have had no reason to come and visit me the next morning at the hall, as she did.

I was busy packing in my own room, enlivening my work by humming gay airs, just to make believe to myself that I was very merry at the prospect of my visit to London. The door opened quickly, and Rachel came in, walking on tiptoe, with her hand to her lips in trepidation. Her face was as pale as snow, and large tears stood in her eyes.

"My mother, my mother!" she said, like one talking in her sleep. "I have seen my mother."

"What do you mean, Rachel?" I cried, quite panic-stricken; for I thought that her mother was dead, and she must have seen a ghost.

"My mother—Mrs. Hollingford; you know her; you are her true daughter; I am nobody—a liar, an outcast. Oh, oh, Margery! she did not know me. Am I changed? I was a child then. And she—oh, God! how sunken her eyes are, and dim!—she did not know me. 'And this is Miss Leonard!' she said; and I hung my false face, and curtseyed from the distance, and ran away. Oh, God! my mother! Margery, Margery!"

The strange confused words passed like light into my brain. First the room grew dark, and then so bewilderingly bright, that I could see nothing. But presently Rachel's white face, with its piteous look, came glimmering towards me. I stretched out both my hands to her, but she melted from my touch; what colour of life remained in her face faded away from it, and she fell in a swoon at my feet.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MESSENGER came to my door to tell me that Mrs. Hollingford was waiting to see me. Rachel, restored to her senses, was lying upon my bed with her face hidden on my hands.

"Rachel," I said, "I must go to her; but before I go tell me, assure me, that what you have said is true, that you are truly the daughter of Mrs. Hollingford."

"I am truly her daughter, Mary Hollingford," said Rachel (for I cannot but still call her Rachel); "I am John's sister. That is the secret I wanted to tell you one night, when you were jealous. But you would not listen. I have more, much more, to tell you; but go now. One thing I beg you to promise me—that you will tell her you have changed your mind about going to London. Let the Tyrrells go, and stay you with me—oh, stay with me! I want you so badly; and, now that I have once spoken, I will trust you with everything—all my wickedness and weakness, all my troubles and difficulties."

She spoke entreatingly, and her tears fell over my hands as she kissed them.

"I will stay," I said; and the sun began to dance on the walls, it seemed. "I will help you all I can; and, oh, how glad I shall be to let the Tyrrells go without me!"

And then I went down-stairs.

I found my dear old lady looking very sad and worn and anxious. I threw myself into her arms and sobbed on her neck.

"What is this, my love?" she said. "Is it a mistake, after all? And whose is the fault? Is it yours, or is it John's?"

"Mine—mine," I cried. "And I am not going to London. But you must not tell John this, because he might think——"

"Think what?" she said, smiling.

"Oh, I don't know; but you must only tell him that I have deferred my visit because Miss Leonard," I choked a little over the word, "has pressed me to remain here longer."

She went away smiling and satisfied, and I went wondering back to my room to hear Rachel's story.

I found her standing, as pale as a ghost, at my window, which commanded a view of the approach to the house. Looking over her shoulder, I saw Mrs. Hollingford's black robe disappearing among the trees.

"Now, Rachel," I said—"now for your story. I have done what you bid me. I am going to stay with you. Trust me with everything. I am full of anxiety and wonder."

But at that moment a messenger came to the door seeking Miss Leonard. Mr. Noble was waiting for her to walk with him.

Rachel flushed at the summons.

"Do not go; send him word that you are engaged—what can it matter?" I said, eagerly.

"No, no," said Rachel, confusedly. "You

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must excuse me now, Margery. I must go. Have patience with me, dear," she added, wistfully. "I will come to your room to-night."

And she went away sadly.

She came to me that night surely. She asked me to put out the lights, and crouching on a low seat by the fire, she told me her story.

"Do not ask me to look in your face till I have done," she said, "but let me hold your hand, and whenever you are too much disgusted and sickened with me to hear me any longer draw away your hand, that I may know."

Poor Rachel! that was what she said in beginning. I will tell you her history as nearly as possible in the way that she related it, but I cannot now recollect, and it were useless to repeat one half the bitter words of self-condemnation which she used.

When quite a little girl (she said) I was sent to a school in Paris. Oh, why did my mother send me so early from her side? It was a worldly school—worldly to the last degree. I learned chiefly to think that in proportion as my father was honoured and wealthy, my friends gay and extravagant, just so were my chances of happiness in life. I had handsome clothes and rich presents, and I was a great favourite.

There was a lady, a friend of my father's, who lived in Paris, and who had liberty to take me for holidays to her house as often as she pleased. She made a pet of me, and I spent at least half my time in her carriage or her salon. She had charming toilettes prepared for me, which I was enchanted to wear. Thus I was early introduced to the gay world of Paris, and learned its lessons of folly and vanity by heart. I can remember myself dressed like a fantastic doll, flitting from one room to another, listening to the conversation of the ladies and admiring their costumes. Every summer I came home for a time, but I found home dull after Paris, and I was rather in awe of my mother's grave face and quiet ways. She always parted with me against her will—I knew that—but it was my father's wish that I should have a Parisian education.

I was just seventeen, on the point of leaving school, bewitched by vanity and arrogance and the delights of the world, when the dreadful news came—you know—about my father, his ruin and disgrace. The effect on me was like nothing you could enter into or conceive. I think it deprived me even of reason, such reason as I had. I had nothing in me—nothing had ever been put in me—to enable me to endure such a horrible reverse.

My mother had written to that friend, the lady I have mentioned, begging her to break the news to me. She, however, was on the point of leaving Paris for her country château, and simply wrote to madame, the mistress of my school, transferring the unpleasant task to her. She sent her love to me, and assured me she was very sorry, desolée, that she could not delay to pay me a visit. I have never seen her since.

And so the whole school knew of my fall and disgrace as soon as I learned it myself. The first thing I did when I understood the full extent of my humiliation was to seize my hat and cloak, and rush out of the house with the intention of never coming back, never being seen again by any one who had ever known me. But after walking Paris for several hours, and getting two or three rough frights through being alone and unprotected, I was overcome with fear and fatigue, and was obliged to return by evening, hungry, weary, and sullen, to the school.

I took it for granted that all the world would now be my enemy, and, determined not to wait to be shuffled off by my friends, I assumed at once a hauteur and defiance which estranged me from every one. My mother, my poor mother, wrote to me, begging me to be patient until she should find it convenient to bring me home. Patient! Oh dear, I did not know the meaning of the word! No, I would not go home; I would change my name, and never willingly see again the face of one who knew me.

Every day I searched the papers, and soon saw an advertisement which I thought might suit me. An English lady in Paris required an English companion, "young, cheerful, and well-educated." Without losing a moment I went straight to the hotel where the lady lived, saw her, pleased her; she was good, kind Mrs. Hill.

I gave her an assumed name, the first that entered my head, and referred her to madame at my pension. When I returned home, I said:

"Madame, I have two hundred francs here in my desk; they shall be yours if you will not undeceive a lady who is coming here to assure herself that I am respectable and well-educated, and that I am Miss Leonard, an orphan, and of an honourable family."

Madame coloured and hesitated; she was surprised at my audacity, but I knew that she had bills coming due just then, and that she was extravagant. We, her pupils, had talked over these things. She hesitated, but in the end agreed to oblige her dear child who had been to her so good and so profitable a pupil. Perhaps she thought I acted with the consent of my mother, that it was not her affair, and that Providence had sent her my little offering to help her to pay her just debts.

Mrs. Hill came the next day; a word satisfied her, and she only stayed about three minutes. She was preparing to leave Paris for Rome, and had many affairs to attend to in the mean time. She urged me to come to her without delay, and in a few hours I was established under her roof.

I was then quite unaware that I had omitted to mention Mrs. Hill's name or address to madame, and that madame had forgotten, or had not been sufficiently interested in the matter to ask it. As I said before, I think it is likely that madame believed I acted with the

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consent of my friends, and that she had no further concern in the matter. Indeed, indeed, I had then no idea of deserting my mother altogether. I was hurried along by impulse, and I intended, when the hurry of action should be over, to write and tell her of all I had done. I little thought that when I quitted my school that day, without leaving behind me the name and address of my new protector, I cut away the only clue by which it might be possible my mother should find me in the future. I did not know that I should afterwards deliberately turn my back upon her, and hide myself from her.

Arthur Noble dined with us on that very first evening of my acquaintance with the Hills. You know that I have been long engaged to Arthur, and I will speak to you freely about him. He has often told me since that he liked me from the first moment he saw me. I felt it even that evening; but I could not believe in it. But the possibility of it dazzled and bewildered me, so powerful was the fascination he possessed for me.

When I went to bed that night I felt my heart strangely softened and opened. I thought a great deal about my mother and my home, of which I knew so little, and for the first time feared that I had done very wrong, and resolved to write to my mother surely on the morrow. I felt myself to be an impostor and a liar, and I trembled, thinking of her just anger at my falsehood and cowardice. I felt that when writing to her I must make up my mind to confess to Mrs. Hill that I had deceived her respecting my name and condition, and bribed my schoolmistress to deceive her also. I knew that my mother would not tolerate the deceit; but the thought of the confession was insufferable to me.

The next day, while we sat together, Mrs. Hill talked to me about Arthur Noble. He was a great pet of hers, and at present she was particularly interested in his circumstances. He had a cousin in England who was a great heiress, and whom his father wanted him to marry. Arthur disliked the idea extremely; and as the lady was supposed to be very well inclined towards him, he was anxious to avoid danger by prolonging his tour abroad. He had arranged to go on to Rome with them, the Hills; but only yesterday his father, Sir Arthur Noble, had met him in Paris, urging him to give up the project, and return at once to England. He, Sir Arthur, had lost heavily by the failure and bad conduct of a London banker—a gentleman who had been his personal friend. My heart beat thickly as I heard her say this; but I did not dare to ask the name of that banker. In the midst of my dismay Arthur Noble came in to assure Mrs. Hill that he still intended to be of the party to Rome. His father's ill-humour would subside by-and-by. He was only a little upset by the shocking conduct of his friend Mr. Hollingford. Then Mrs. Hill asked questions on the subject, and I sat by stitching at my embroidery while Arthur described my father's disgrace.

My letter to my mother was not written that day. In the afternoon we went out, and in the excitement of shopping I tried to forget everything—who I was, what I was, what I had done, and what I ought to do. In the evening Arthur Noble appeared again, and with him came his father. Sir Arthur and Mr. Hill conversed apart, but I could hear the fiery old baronet giving vent to his anger against my father. Arthur devoted himself to Mrs. Hill and me. I was bewildered and distracted at the position in which my rash conduct had placed me, and I was very silent. Arthur exerted himself to amuse me, and under the spell of his attractions my remorse was smothered.

I have not spoken to you yet of the wonderful affection which Mrs. Hill lavished on me. You have seen it lately, but it was the same from the first. She made me her daughter at once, as far as her conduct to me could do so, though I had been some months her companion before she declared her intention of formally adopting me.

Day followed day, and Arthur was always by my side. A new feverish dream of happiness encompassed me, and it was only in the quiet of wakeful nights that I thought of my mother and sisters and brother, and longed to hear some news of my sorrowful home. Every night my wrestlings with my selfish nature grew weaker and weaker. I could not risk exposure and banishment from Arthur's presence. I left Paris for home without writing to my mother.

You will hate me, Margery. I hate myself. I gave myself up to the pleasure of the hour, and in selfish happiness drowned the reproaches of my conscience, till I told myself at last that it was too late to undo what I had done. Time flew, and I became engaged to Arthur, secretly at first, for he dreaded his father's displeasure. We went from place to place, staying a few months here and a few months there. We spent a year at Rome, and Arthur was with us nearly all the time. When we had been some time engaged, Arthur confided in his father, and asked his consent to our marriage. Sir Arthur was hopelessly enraged at the idea, and, as we could not marry without his consent, we have been obliged to be patient ever since. Arthur has always kept telling me that he knew his father would relent in time. And he was right. The time has come. Sir Arthur has at last reluctantly withdrawn his opposition, and we may be married on any day in the future which I may choose to name.

Stay, stay! she went on, as I was about to interrupt her eagerly with a question, let me tell you everything before I stop. I used to dream that when I was married to Arthur, when no power on earth could separate us, I would confess who I was, seek out my mother, and ask her forgiveness. Remorse never left me, and I had bitterness in the midst of my happiness. Arthur suspected that I had trouble which I would not share with him, yet I could not bring myself to con-

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fess, so great was my fear of being parted from him.

'Some time before that evening when I first met you in London, I went to see some friends of Arthur's. During that time, several months, I had not seen Mr. or Mrs. Hill; but in the meanwhile Mrs. Hill had written to me of their intention of coming here to Hillsbro', saying that Mr. Hill's new agent had written such cheerful accounts of the estate, that he felt a longing to be on the spot, giving encouragement to the improvements which were going forward. She did not mention the name of the new agent, and it was only on that evening when I first met you, when with shame and bitter self-reproach I heard you defend my poor mother so valiantly, it was only then I knew that the agent was my brother, and that I was actually coming to live within a few miles of my deserted home.

My first thought was that now, indeed, the time for making all the crooked things straight had come; but, oh Margery, you cannot imagine—one like you never could imagine anything so wickedly weak as I am. The old bugbear of our family disgrace, the old terror of Arthur's throwing me off in disgust, rose up again with all their former strength, and I came here torn by conflicting feelings. You saw my meeting with John. The next day when he came here to dine, I found an opportunity of telling him my story. He was very severe with me at first, though not so much so as I deserved; but he forgave me at last, on condition that I would make up my mind to be honest with every one, let the consequences be what they might. I promised this; but again and again my courage has failed. He has been so good, so kind, so patient with me. He told me of my mother, of the children, of you, and, oh, how he chafed at the thought of what you would feel about the affair. Every time we met he reproached me with my cowardice and delay, and I made fresh promises; but Arthur's letters invariably broke down my courage and destroyed my resolutions. Again and again John has asked me to allow him to tell you who I was, but I would not suffer it. I could see no reason for humbling myself sooner to you than to any one else, until one day it flashed on me that you were jealous of me. Then, after a hard struggle, I came to you to tell my story. You repulsed me, you even assured me that the Tyrrells were your best friends. I was glad of the excuse to spare myself and my secret. And so it has gone on. Latterly John has scarcely spoken, or hardly looked at me. I think he has given me up. I know not what he means to do, but I think he means to let me have my own way. I think I should have been silent to the last, but that I saw my mother to-day. I saw her. I saw her!

"And now you will tell her all—everything," I said, squeezing her hands, while the tears were raining down my face.

"Margery, Margery!" cried Rachel, "how can I give up Arthur? Here he has come to me after these years of waiting, and presses me to name a day for our marriage, and I am to meet him with a story like this! He would despise me."

"I think," said I, "that if he be a generous man he will forgive you. After loving you so long, he will not give you up so easily. And your mother," I added. "Think of all she has suffered. Is she worth no sacrifice?"

"She never knew me," said Rachel, gloomily; "and she will be happier never to know me. She could not have smiled as she did to-day if she had not forgotten that I ever existed."

"That is a selfish delusion," I said. "If your mother never knew you, it is plain, at least, that you have never known her. Such a woman could not forget her child. You cannot think that she has not sought for you, and mourned for you, all these years?"

"Oh no," said Rachel, with another burst of sorrow, "John has told me. They searched, they advertised, they suffered agony, and feared every terrible thing, till at last they were obliged to soothe one another by trying to think me, by speaking of me as, dead. Little Mopsie thinks I am dead. So it has been, and so it must be."

"So it must not be," I persisted, and so I fought with her all night. The dawn was in the room before she got up to leave me, pale, and worn, and weary, but promising that she would make yet one more great struggle with herself to break the chain of deceit with which one rash falsehood had so strongly bound her.

CHAPTER XIV.

I HAD the happiness of seeing my friends the Tyrrells depart for London without me. I think they were both, brother and sister, somewhat tired of my inconsistencies and vagaries, and I dare say they felt as little sorrow at parting as I did.

The long hot days of summer followed one another in a slow wandering fashion. No news reached us from the farm. I had vaguely hoped that John would come and speak to me again; but we neither saw him nor heard from him. Mr. Hill was from home during these days, and there was no necessity for John to present himself amongst us, though there might have been many an opportunity if he had cared to seek one. All the light short nights I lay awake, wondering what was going to become of my life.

And Rachel? Was she mindful of the promise she had given me on that night? Alas! no, my dears. She was absorbed in her Arthur. They went here and there together; they were ever side by side, dreaming away the time; seeming lost to every one else in their happiness. I should have thought that Rachel had forgotten all her confession to me, all that had passed between us on the subject, but for a piteous look which she gave me now and again when no one was by.

At last an early day was fixed for the marri-

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age, and a wonderful trousseau came down from London for Rachel. The pretty things were hardly looked at by her and packed away out of sight. Then I saw that two warring spirits were striving within Rachel. The colour left her face, she grew thin, she started and trembled at a sudden word or noise. Sometimes in the middle of the summer nights, just as the earliest birds were beginning to stir, she would come into my room and throw herself weeping across my bed. But I dared not speak to her then. She would not tolerate a word. And so she took her way.

One morning Arthur went off to explore some place alone; a most unusual event. I was in my own room when Rachel came in to me, suddenly and quickly, and very pale.

"Come," she said, "come now, I have got courage to go this moment, but I must not delay. Come, come!"

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"You know well," she said, impatiently; "to my mother. See, I am taking nothing valuable with me."

She had on a calico morning dress, and plain straw hat. She had taken the ear-rings out of her ears, the rings off her fingers.

I was ready in an instant, and we went off through the wood together. I did not attempt to ask her what she meant to do; she was not in a mood for answering questions. She took my hand as we walked, and held it tightly, and we went along as children do when they are going through the green wood in quest of May flowers, only our steps were more fearful, and our faces paler than children's are wont to be. We went on very silently and bravely, till we were about half way, deep in the wood, when a cheerful shout came across our ears, and a swaying and crackling of bushes; and Arthur Noble's handsome genial face and stalwart figure confronted us on the path.

"Maids a Maying?" he said. "A pretty picture, on my word. Whither be you bound, fair ladies, and will you accept the services of a true knight errant?"

Rachel's hand had turned cold in mine. "We are going to the farm to visit Mrs. Hollingford," I said stoutly, "and as you are not acquainted with the lady you had better go home alone, and amuse Mrs. Hill till we come back."

"Ah! but I do not like that arrangement at all," said Arthur. "Why should the lady at the farm not receive me? Has any one been giving me a bad character? Speak, Rachel, may I not go with you?"

"I cannot go any futher," said Rachel; "I am not well." And indeed she looked ill.

"Rest a little," I said, pitilessly, "and by-and-by you will be able to go on."

But Arthur, all alarmed, looked at me with surprise and reproach, drew Rachel's hand within his own, and began walking slowly towards the hall. I followed, with no company but my reflections, which were odd enough; and so ended this adventure.

And now what I think the most startling occurrence of my story has got to be related, and when it is told all will be pretty nearly finished.

It was arranged that the wedding should be very private. Sir Arthur, although he had reluctantly withdrawn his opposition, had refused to be present at the marriage, therefore, no other guests were invited. The eve of the day arrived, and I had spent the forenoon in decorating the little church with white flowers. Early in the morning Rachel and Arthur, with Mr. and Mrs. Hill and myself, were to proceed thither, and an hour later the husband and wife were to depart on their life's adventure together.

I remember the kind of evening it was. There was a great flush in the sky, and a great glow on the earth, that made the garden paths hot to the tread, and crisped up the leaves of the full-blown roses. There was a rare blending of heaven and earth in lovely alluring distances, and a luscious odour of sweet ripe things athirst for rain. The drawing-room windows were thrown up as high as they would go, and it was cooler within than without. Up-stairs the bride's trunks were packed, and the white robe was spread out in state, waiting its moment. We were all in the drawing-room, Mr. and Mrs. Hill variously unoccupied, Rachel and Arthur sitting together before a window. In another window I was down on my knees leaning my elbows on the open sash, and gazing out on the idealized world of the hour in a kind of restful reverie, which held the fears and pains and unsatisfied hopes of my heart in a sweet thrall, even as the deep-coloured glory that was abroad fused into common beauty all the rough seams and barren places of the unequal land. Suddenly out of the drowsy luxury of stillness there came a quick crushing sound, flying feet on the gravel, and a dark slim figure dashed through the light. Whose was the figure? I could not be sure till I sprang with a shock to my feet, and went to the window where Rachel and Arthur were sitting. Then there was no mistake about it. Here was Jane Hollingford, suddenly arrived.

She stood strangely at the window, with one foot on the low sash, so that she could look searchingly into the room. She had on no bonnet nor hat, and the dust of the road was in her hair; it was also white, up to the knees, on her black dress. She was quite breathless, and looked sick and faint with over-running. But there was Jane's wild spirit shining as strong as ever out of her black eyes. She drew breath a moment and looked eagerly into the room with that half-blinded searching look out of the dazzling light into the shade. Then her eyes fell on Rachel, and she spoke, and said a few words which electrified us all.

"Mary Hollingford," she said; "come home. Your father is dying, and he wants to see you."

Mr. and Mrs. Hill came to the window to see

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what it was. We were all silent from surprise for about a minute. Then Rachel rose trembling.

"Sit still my love," said Arthur; "it is only a mad gipsy girl." And Jane was not unlike a gipsy.

"Come, come!" cried Jane, stamping her foot with impatience, not vouchsafing even a look at Arthur. "Come, or you will be too late; there is not a moment to lose."

I think Mrs. Hill's voice piped shrill exclamations at my ear, but I remember nothing that she said. Mr. Hill, who knew Jane's appearance, was speechless. Arthur had risen, and stood by Rachel, looking amazedly from her to Jane, and from Jane to her. Rachel turned on him a grievous look which I have never forgotten, and pushed him from her with both her hands back into the room. Then she glanced at me with a mute entreaty, and I stepped with her out of the window, and we went across the lawn, and through the trees, and away along all the old tracks to the farm. Following Jane, who, knowing we were behind her, flew like the wind, without once looking back. We soon lost her, for we often paused to pant and lean against one another for a moment's respite in this strange remarkable race. We did not speak, but I looked at Rachel, and she was like a poor lily soiled and crushed by the storm, with her white dress trailing through the dust, and her satin shoes torn on her feet. But that was nothing. We reached the farm-house. There was some one moving to meet white dishevelled, quivering Rachel. There was a cry, smothered at once in the awful hush of the place, and Rachel fell, clasping her mother's knees. I left them alone. What sobbings and whisperings, confession and forgiveness followed, God and his angels heard.

I went blindly into the hall, knowing nothing of what I did. I met John coming to me. I had no words. I stretched out my hands to him. He took them, took me in his arms, and that was our reconciliation.

That night we were all present at a death-bed. It was only bit by bit that I learned the story of how the dying man came to be there. The poor erring father, reduced to want, and smitten by disease, had crept back in the disguise of a beggar to ask the charity of his deserted wife and children, and to breathe his last sigh among loving forgiving hearts. It was Jane, stern Jane, who had denounced him so cruelly, nursed such bitter resentment against him; it was Jane, who had happened, of a summer evening in her mother's absence, to open the door to his knock, had taken him into her arms and into her heart, had nursed him, caressed him, watched and prayed with him. So that was the end of poor Jane's hardness of heart. It was all washed away in tears at her father's death-bed. The last trace of it vanished at sight of Rachel's remorse.

My dear Mrs. Hollingford, my sweet old mother! These two shocks well nigh caused her death; but when she had nobly weathered the storm she found a daughter whom she had mourned as lost, living and breathing and loving in her arms, and her brave heart accepted much comfort.

And what about those three kind souls whom we left in such sudden consternation by the open window in the drawing-room at the hall? Why, of course, they came to inquire into the mystery. I was the one who had to tell them Rachel's story, as kindly and delicately as I might. You will be glad, my children, to know that they made very little of their darling's fault. Mr. Hill was somewhat grave over the matter, but Mrs. Hill would not allow a word of blame to be uttered against her pet. She urged, she invented a hundred excuses; good, kind soul. As for Arthur Noble, he readily discerned love for himself as the cause of her unwilling desertion of others. His nature was large enough to appreciate the worth of my John and his mother. As he had been willing, he said, to wed Rachel friendless, so was he now more willing to wed Rachel with friends whom he could love. So the beloved culprit was tried and acquitted, and after many days had passed, and the poor father had been laid in the earth, a chastened Rachel was coaxed back to her lover's side, and, I have no doubt, told him her own story in her own way.

But old Mr. Hill was, to my mind, the most sensible of them all, who said to his wife: "They may say what they please, sweetheart! but, to my thinking, the lad, John, is by far the flower of the Hollingford flock!" And the fine old gentleman proved his good-will after years had passed that were then to come. When called upon to follow his wife, who died before him, he bequeathed the Hillsbro' estate to my husband.

Rachel (he always called her Rachel) and Arthur went to live in Paris. Jane married a great doctor of learning, and found her home in London; and Mopsie made a sweet little wife for a country squire, and stayed among the roses and milk-pans.

For John and me, our home was the farm, till fortune promoted us to the hall. Thither the dear mother accompanied us, and there she died in my arms. There, also, at last, my husband. And now, my darlings, your father, my son, is the owner of Hillsbro', and the hall is your own happy home.

And the old woman has returned to the farm.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

CHAPTER VII.—(CONTINUED).

"I HAVE lost a beautiful girl, an excellent social position, and a handsome income," Mr. Godfrey began; "and I have submitted to it without a struggle. What can be the motive for such extraordinary conduct as that? My precious friend, there is no motive."

"No motive?" I repeated.

"Let me appeal, dear Miss Clack, to your experience of children," he went on. "A child pursues a certain course of conduct. You are greatly struck by it, and you attempt to get at the motive. The dear little thing is incapable of telling you its motive. You might as well ask the grass why it grows, or the birds why they sing. Well! in this matter, I am like the dear little thing—like the grass—like the birds. I don't know why I made a proposal of marriage to Miss Verinder. I don't know why I have shamefully neglected my dear Ladies. I don't know why I have apostatised from the Mothers'-Small-Clothes. You say to the child, Why have you been naughty? And the little angel puts its finger into its mouth, and doesn't know. My case exactly, Miss Clack! I couldn't confess it to anybody else. I feel impelled to confess it to *you!*"

I began to recover myself. A mental problem was involved here. I am deeply interested in mental problems—and I am not, it is thought, without some skill in solving them.

"Best of friends, exert your intellect, and help me," he proceeded. "Tell me—why does a time come when these matrimonial proceedings of mine begin to look like something done in a dream? Why does it suddenly occur to me that my true happiness is in helping my dear Ladies, in going my modest round of useful work, in saying my few earnest words when called on by my Chairman? What do I want with a position? I have got a position. What do I want with an income? I can pay for my bread and cheese, and my nice little lodging, and my two coats a year. What do I want with Miss Verinder? She has told me with her own lips (this, dear lady, is between ourselves) that she loves another man, and that her only idea in marrying me is to try and put that other man out of her head. What a horrid union is this! Oh, dear me, what a horrid union is this! Such are my reflections, Miss Clack, on my way to Brighton. I approach Rachel with the feeling of a criminal who is going to receive his sentence. When I find that she has changed her mind too—when I hear her propose to break the engagement—I experience (there is no sort of doubt about it) a most overpowering sense of relief. A month ago I was pressing her rapturously to my bosom. An hour ago, the happiness of knowing that I shall never press her again, intoxicates me like strong liquor. The thing seems impossible—the thing can't be. And yet there are the facts, as I had the honour of stating them when we first sat down together in these two chairs. I have lost a beautiful girl, an excellent social position, and a handsome income; and I have submitted to it without a struggle. Can *you* account for it, dear friend? It's quite beyond *me*."

His magnificent head sank on his breast, and he gave up his own mental problem in despair.

I was deeply touched. The case (if I may speak as a spiritual physician) was now quite plain to me. It is no uncommon event, in the experience of us all, to see the possessors of exalted ability occasionally humbled to the level of the most poorly-gifted people about them. The object, no doubt, in the wise economy of Providence, is to remind greatness that it is mortal, and that the power which has conferred it can also take it away. It was now—to my mind—easy to discern one of these salutary humiliations in the deplorable proceedings on dear Mr. Godfrey's part, of which I had been the unseen witness. And it was equally easy to recognise the welcome reappearance of his own finer nature in the horror with which he recoiled from the idea of a marriage with Rachel, and in the charming eagerness which he showed to return to his Ladies and his Poor.

I put this view before him in a few simple and sisterly words. His joy was beautiful to see. He compared himself, as I went on, to a lost man emerging from the darkness into the light. When I answered for a loving reception of him at the Mothers'-Small-Clothes, the

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grateful heart of our Christian Hero overflowed. He pressed my hands alternately to his lips. Overwhelmed by the exquisite triumph of having got him back among us, I let him do what he liked with my hands. I closed my eyes. I felt my head, in an ecstasy of spiritual self-forgetfulness, sinking on his shoulder. In a moment more I should certainly have swooned away in his arms, but for an interruption from the outer world, which brought me to myself again. A horrid rattling of knives and forks sounded outside the door, and the footman came in to lay the table for luncheon.

Mr. Godfrey started up, and looked at the clock on the mantel-piece.

"How time flies with *you!*" he exclaimed. "I shall barely catch the train."

I ventured on asking why he was in such a hurry to get back to town. His answer reminded me of family difficulties that were still to be reconciled, and of family disagreements that were yet to come.

"I have heard from my father," he said. "Business obliges him to leave Frizinghall for London to-day, and he proposes coming on here, either this evening or to-morrow. I must tell him what has happened between Rachel and me. His heart is set on our marriage—there will be great difficulty, I fear, in reconciling him to the breaking-off of the engagement. I must stop him, for all our sakes, from coming here till he *is* reconciled. Best and dearest of friends, we shall meet again!"

With those words he hurried out. In equal haste on my side, I ran up-stairs to compose myself in my own room before meeting Aunt Ablewhite and Rachel at the luncheon-table.

I am well aware—to dwell for a moment yet on the subject of Mr. Godfrey—that the all-profaning opinion of the world has charged him with having his own private reasons for releasing Rachel from her engagement, at the first opportunity she gave him. It has also reached my ears, that his anxiety to recover his place in my estimation has been attributed, in certain quarters, to a mercenary eagerness to make his peace (through me) with a venerable committee-woman at the Mothers'-Small-Clothes, abundantly blessed with the goods of this world, and a beloved and intimate friend of my own. I only notice these odious slanders for the sake of declaring that they never had a moment's influence on my mind. In obedience to my instructions, I have exhibited the fluctuations in my opinion of our Christian Hero, exactly as I find them recorded in my diary. In justice to myself, let me here add that, once reinstated in his place in my estimation, my gifted friend never lost that place again. I write with the tears in my eyes, burning to say more. But no—I am cruelly limited to my actual experience of persons and things. In less than a month from the time of which I am now writing, events in the money-market (which diminished even *my* miserable little income) forced me into foreign exile, and left me with nothing but a loving remembrance of Mr. Godfrey which the slander of the world has assailed, and assailed in vain.

Let me dry my eyes, and return to my narrative.

I went down-stairs to luncheon, naturally anxious to see how Rachel was affected by her release from her marriage engagement.

It appeared to me—but I own I am a poor authority in such matters—that the recovery of her freedom had set her thinking again of that other man whom she loved, and that she was furious with herself for not being able to control a revulsion of feeling of which she was secretly ashamed. Who was the man? I had my suspicions—but it was needless to waste time in idle speculation. When I had converted her, she would, as a matter of course, have no concealments from Me. I should hear all about the man; I should hear all about the Moonstone. If I had had no higher object in stirring her up to a sense of spiritual things, the motive of relieving her mind of its guilty secrets would have been enough of itself to encourage me to go on.

Aunt Ablewhite took her exercise in the afternoon in an invalid chair. Rachel accompanied her. "I wish I could drag the chair," she broke out, recklessly. "I wish I could fatigue myself till I was ready to drop!"

She was in the same humour in the evening. I discovered in one of my friend's precious publications—The Life, Letters, and Labours of Miss Jane Ann Stamper, forty-fifth edition—passages which bore with a marvellous appropriateness on Rachel's present position. Upon my proposing to read them, she went to the piano. Conceive how little she must have known of serious people, if she supposed that my patience was to be exhausted in that way! I kept Miss Jane Ann Stamper by me, and waited for events with the most unfaltering trust in the future.

Old Mr. Ablewhite never made his appearance that night. But I knew the importance which his worldly greed attached to his son's marriage with Miss Verinder—and I felt a positive conviction (do what Mr. Godfrey might to prevent it) that we should see him the next day. With his interference in the matter, the storm on which I had counted would certainly come, and the salutary exhaustion of Rachel's resisting powers would as certainly follow. I am not ignorant that old Mr. Ablewhite has the reputation generally (especially among his inferiors) of being a remarkably good-natured man. According to my observation of him, he deserves his reputation as long as he has his own way, and not a moment longer.

The next day, exactly as I had foreseen, Aunt Ablewhite was as near to being astonished as her nature would permit, by the sudden appearance of her husband. He had barely been a minute in the house, before he was followed, to *my* astonishment this time, by an unexpected complication, in the shape of Mr. Bruff.

I never remember feeling the presence of the

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lawyer to be more unwelcome than I felt it at that moment. He looked ready for anything in the way of an obstructive proceeding—capable even of keeping the peace, with Rachel for one of the combatants!

"This is a pleasant surprise, sir," said Mr. Ablewhite, addressing himself with his deceptive cordiality to Mr. Bruff. "When I left your office yesterday, I didn't expect to have the honour of seeing you at Brighton to-day."

"I turned over our conversation in my mind, after you had gone," replied Mr. Bruff. "And it occurred to me that I might perhaps be of some use on this occasion. I was just in time to catch the train, and I had no opportunity of discovering the carriage in which you were travelling."

Having given that explanation, he seated himself by Rachel. I retired modestly to a corner—with Miss Jane Ann Stamper on my lap, in case of emergency. My aunt sat at the window, placidly fanning herself as usual. Mr. Ablewhite stood up in the middle of the room, with his bald head much pinker than I had ever seen it yet, and addressed himself in the most affectionate manner to his niece.

"Rachel, my dear," he said, "I have heard some very extraordinary news from Godfrey. And I am here to inquire about it. You have a sitting-room of your own in this house. Will you honour me by showing me the way to it?"

Rachel never moved. Whether she was determined to bring matters to a crisis, or whether she was prompted by some private sign from Mr. Bruff, is more than I can tell. She declined doing old Mr. Ablewhite the honour of conducting him to her sitting-room.

"Whatever you wish to say to me," she answered, "can be said here—in the presence of my relatives, and in the presence" (she looked at Mr. Bruff) "of my mother's trusted old friend."

"Just as you please, my dear," said the amiable Mr. Ablewhite. He took a chair. The rest of them looked at his face—as if they expected it, after seventy years of worldly training, to speak the truth. *I* looked at the top of his bald head; having noticed, on other occasions, that the temper which was really in him had a habit of registering itself *there*.

"Some weeks ago," pursued the old gentleman, "my son informed me that Miss Verinder had done him the honour to engage herself to marry him. Is it possible, Rachel, that he can have misinterpreted—or presumed upon—what you really said to him?"

"Certainly not," she replied. "I did engage myself to marry him."

"Very frankly answered!" said Mr. Ablewhite. "And most satisfactory, my dear, so far. In respect to what happened some weeks since, Godfrey has made no mistake. The error is evidently in what he told me yesterday. I begin to see it now. You and he have had a lovers' quarrel—and my foolish son has interpreted it seriously. Ah! I should have known better than that, at his age."

The fallen nature in Rachel—the mother Eve, so to speak—began to chafe at this.

"Pray let us understand each other, Mr. Ablewhite," she said. "Nothing in the least like a quarrel took place yesterday between your son and me. If he told you that I proposed breaking off our marriage engagement, and that he agreed on his side—he told you the truth."

The self-registering thermometer at the top of Mr. Ablewhite's bald head, began to indicate a rise of temper. His face was more amiable than ever—but *there* was the pink at the top of his face, a shade deeper already!

"Come, come, my dear!" he said in his most soothing manner, "now don't be angry, and don't be hard on poor Godfrey! He has evidently said some unfortunate thing. He was always clumsy from a child—but he means well, Rachel, he means well!"

"Mr. Ablewhite, I have either expressed myself very badly, or you are purposely mistaking me. Once for all, it is a settled thing between your son and myself that we remain, for the rest of our lives, cousins and nothing more. Is that plain enough?"

The tone in which she said those words made it impossible, even for old Mr. Ablewhite, to mistake her any longer. His thermometer went up another degree, and his voice when he next spoke, ceased to be the voice which is appropriate to a notoriously good-natured man.

"I am to understand, then," he said, "that your marriage engagement is broken off?"

"You are to understand that, Mr. Ablewhite, if you please."

"I am also to take it as a matter of fact that the proposal to withdraw from the engagement came, in the first instance, from *you*?"

"It came, in the first instance, from me. And it met, as I have told you, with your son's consent and approval."

The thermometer went up to the top of the register. I mean, the pink changed suddenly to scarlet.

"My son is a mean-spirited hound!" cried this furious old worldling. "In justice to myself as his father—not in justice to *him*—I beg to ask you, Miss Verinder, what complaint you have to make of Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite?"

Here Mr. Bruff interfered for the first time.

"You are not bound to answer that question," he said to Rachel.

Old Mr. Ablewhite fastened on him instantly.

"Don't forget, sir," he said, "that you are a self-invited guest here. Your interference would have come with a better grace if you had waited until it was asked for."

Mr. Bruff took no notice. The smooth varnish on *his* wicked old face never cracked. Rachel thanked him for the advice he had given to her, and then turned to old Mr. Ablewhite—preserving her composure in a manner which (having regard to her age and her sex) was simply awful to see.

"Your son put the same question to me which you have just asked," she said. "I

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had only one answer for him, and I have only one answer for you. I proposed that we should release each other, because reflection had convinced me that I should best consult his welfare and mine by retracting a rash promise, and leaving him free to make his choice elsewhere."

"What has my son done?" persisted Mr. Ablewhite. "I have a right to know that. What has my son done?"

She persisted just as obstinately on her side.

"You have had the only explanation which I think it necessary to give to you, or to him," she answered.

"In plain English, it's your sovereign will and pleasure, Miss Verinder, to jilt my son?"

Rachel was silent for a moment. Sitting close behind her, I heard her sigh. Mr. Bruff took her hand, and gave it a little squeeze. She recovered herself, and answered Mr. Ablewhite as boldly as ever.

"I have exposed myself to worse misconstruction than that," she said. "And I have borne it patiently. The time has gone by, when you could mortify me by calling me a jilt."

She spoke with a bitterness of tone which satisfied me that the scandal of the Moonstone had been in some way recalled to her mind. "I have no more to say," she added, wearily, not addressing the words to any one in particular, and looking away from us all, out of the window that was nearest to her.

Mr. Ablewhite got upon his feet, and pushed away his chair so violently that it toppled over and fell on the floor.

"I have something more to say on my side," he announced, bringing down the flat of his hand on the table with a bang. "I have to say that if my son doesn't feel this insult, I do!"

Rachel started, and looked at him in sudden surprise.

"Insult?" she repeated. "What do you mean?"

"Insult!" reiterated Mr. Ablewhite. "I know your motive, Miss Verinder, for breaking your promise to my son! I know it as certainly as if you had confessed it in so many words. Your cursed family pride is insulting Godfrey, as it insulted *me* when I married your aunt. Her family—her beggarly family—turned their backs on her for marrying an honest man, who had made his own place and won his own fortune. I had no ancestors. I wasn't descended from a set of cut-throat scoundrels who lived by robbery and murder. I couldn't point to the time when the Ablewhites hadn't a shirt to their backs, and couldn't sign their own names. Ha! ha! I wasn't good enough for the Herncastles, when *I* married. And, now it comes to the pinch, my son isn't good enough for *you*. I suspected it, all along. You have got the Herncastle blood in you, my young lady! I suspected it all along."

"A very unworthy suspicion," remarked Mr. Bruff. "I am astonished that you have the courage to acknowledge it."

Before Mr. Ablewhite could find words to answer in, Rachel spoke in a tone of the most exasperating contempt.

"Surely," she said to the lawyer, "this is beneath notice. If he can think in *that* way, let us leave him to think as he pleases."

From scarlet, Mr. Ablewhite was now becoming purple. He gasped for breath; he looked backwards and forwards from Rachel to Mr. Bruff in such a frenzy of rage with both of them that he didn't know which to attack first. His wife, who had sat impenetrably fanning herself up to this time, began to be alarmed, and attempted, quite uselessly, to quiet him. I had, throughout this distressing interview, felt more than one inward call to interfere with a few earnest words, and had controlled myself under a dread of the possible results, very unworthy of a Christian Englishwoman who looks, not to what is meanly prudent, but to what is morally right. At the point at which matters had now arrived, I rose superior to all considerations of mere expediency. If I had contemplated interposing any remonstrance of my own humble devising, I might possibly still have hesitated. But the distressing domestic emergency which now confronted me, was most marvellously and beautifully provided for in the Correspondence of Miss Jane Ann Stamper—Letter one thousand and one, on "Peace in Families." I rose in my modest corner, and I opened my precious book.

"Dear Mr. Ablewhite," I said, "one word!"

When I first attracted the attention of the company by rising, I could see that he was on the point of saying something rude to me. My sisterly form of address checked him. He stared in heathen astonishment.

"As an affectionate well-wisher and friend," I proceeded, "and as one long accustomed to arouse, convince, prepare, enlighten, and fortify others, permit me to take the most pardonable of all liberties—the liberty of composing your mind."

He began to recover himself; he was on the point of breaking out—he *would* have broken out, with anybody else. But my voice (habitually gentle) possesses a high note or so, in emergencies. In this emergency, I felt imperatively called upon to have the highest voice of the two.

I held up my precious book before him; I rapped the open page impressively with my forefinger. "Not my words!" I exclaimed, in a burst of fervent interruption. "Oh, don't suppose that I claim attention for My humble words! Manna in the wilderness, Mr. Ablewhite! Dew on the parched earth! Words of comfort, words of wisdom, words of love—the blessed, blessed, blessed words of Miss Jane Ann Stamper!"

I was stopped there by a momentary impediment of the breath. Before I could recover myself, this monster in human form shouted out furiously,

"Miss Jane Ann Stamper be ——!"

It is impossible for me to write the awful word, which is here represented by a blank. I

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shrieked as it passed his lips; I flew to my little bag on the side table; I shook out all my tracts; I seized the one particular tract on profane swearing, entitled, "Hush for Heaven's Sake!"; I handed it to him with an expression of agonised entreaty. He tore it in two, and threw it back at me across the table. The rest of them rose in alarm, not knowing what might happen next. I instantly sat down again in my corner. There had once been an occasion, under somewhat similar circumstances, when Miss Jane Ann Stamper had been taken by the two shoulders and turned out of a room. I waited, inspired by *her* spirit, for a repetition of *her* martyrdom.

But no—it was not to be. His wife was the next person whom he addressed. "Who—who—who," he said, stammering with rage, "asked this impudent fanatic into the house? Did you?"

Before Aunt Ablewhite could say a word, Rachel answered for her:

"Miss Clack is here," she said, "as my guest."

Those words had a singular effect on Mr. Ablewhite. They suddenly changed him from a man in a state of red-hot anger to a man in a state of icy-cold contempt. It was plain to everybody that Rachel had said something—short and plain as her answer had been—which gave him the upper hand of her at last.

"Oh?" he said. "Miss Clack is here as *your* guest—in *my* house?"

It was Rachel's turn to lose her temper at that. Her colour rose, and her eyes brightened fiercely. She turned to the lawyer, and, pointing to Mr. Ablewhite, asked, haughtily, "What does he mean?"

Mr. Bruff interfered for the third time.

"You appear to forget," he said, addressing Mr. Ablewhite, "that you took this house as Miss Verinder's guardian, for Miss Verinder's use."

"Not quite so fast," interposed Mr. Ablewhite. "I have a last word to say, which I should have said some time since, if this——" He looked my way, pondering what abominable name he should call me—"if this Rampant Spinster had not interrupted us. I beg to inform you, sir, that, if my son is not good enough to be Miss Verinder's husband, I cannot presume to consider his father good enough to be Miss Verinder's guardian. Understand, if you please, that I refuse to accept the position which is offered to me by Lady Verinder's will. In your legal phrase, I decline to act. This house has necessarily been hired in my name. I take the entire responsibility of it on my shoulders. It is my house. I can keep it, or let it, just as I please. I have no wish to hurry Miss Verinder. On the contrary, I beg her to remove her guest and her luggage, at her own entire convenience." He made a low bow, and walked out of the room.

That was Mr. Ablewhite's revenge on Rachel, for refusing to marry his son!

The instant the door closed, Aunt Ablewhite exhibited a phenomenon which silenced us all. She became endowed with energy enough to cross the room!

"My dear," she said, taking Rachel by the hand, "I should be ashamed of my husband, if I didn't know that it is his temper which has spoken to you, and not himself. You," continued Aunt Ablewhite, turning on me in my corner with another endowment of energy, in her looks this time instead of her limbs—"you are the mischievous person who irritated him. I hope I shall never see you or your tracts again." She went back to Rachel, and kissed her. "I beg your pardon, my dear," she said, "in my husband's name. What can I do for you?"

Consistently perverse in everything—capricious and unreasonable in all the actions of her life—Rachel melted into tears at those commonplace words, and returned her aunt's kiss in silence.

"If I may be permitted to answer for Miss Verinder," said Mr. Bruff, "might I ask you, Mrs. Ablewhite, to send Penelope down with her mistress's bonnet and shawl. Leave us ten minutes together," he added, in a lower tone, "and you may rely on my setting matters right, to your satisfaction as well as to Rachel's."

The trust of the family in this man was something wonderful to see. Without a word more, on her side, Aunt Ablewhite left the room.

"Ah!" said Mr. Bruff, looking after her. "The Herncastle blood has its drawbacks, I admit. But there *is* something in good breeding, after all!"

Having made that purely worldly remark, he looked hard at my corner, as if he expected me to go. My interest in Rachel—an infinitely higher interest than his—rivetted me to my chair.

Mr. Bruff gave it up, exactly as he had given it up at Aunt Verinder's, in Montagu Square. He led Rachel to a chair by the window, and spoke to her there.

"My dear young lady," he said, "Mr. Ablewhite's conduct has naturally shocked you, and taken you by surprise. If it was worth while to contest the question with such a man, we might soon show him that he is not to have things all his own way. But it isn't worth while. You were quite right in what you said just now: he is beneath our notice."

He stopped, and looked round at my corner. I sat there quite immovable, with my tracts at my elbow, and with Miss Jane Ann Stamper on my lap.

"You know," he resumed, turning back again to Rachel, "that it was part of your poor mother's fine nature always to see the best of the people about her, and never the worst. She named her brother-in-law your guardian because she believed in him, and because she thought it would please her sister. I had never liked Mr. Ablewhite myself, and I induced your mother to let me insert a clause in the will, empowering her executors, in certain events, to

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consult with me about the appointment of a new guardian. One of those events has happened to-day; and I find myself in a position to end all these dry business details, I hope agreeably, with a message from my wife. Will you honour Mrs. Bruff by becoming her guest? And will you remain under my roof, and be one of my family, until we wise people have laid our heads together, and have settled what is to be done next?"

At those words, I rose to interfere. Mr. Bruff had done exactly what I had dreaded he would do, when he asked Mrs. Ablewhite for Rachel's bonnet and shawl.

Before I could interpose a word, Rachel had accepted his invitation in the warmest terms. If I suffered the arrangement thus made between them to be carried out—if she once passed the threshold of Mr. Bruff's door—farewell to the fondest hope of my life, the hope of bringing my lost sheep back to the fold! The bare idea of such a calamity as this quite overwhelmed me. I cast the miserable trammels of worldly discretion to the winds, and spoke with the fervour that filled me, in the words that came first.

"Stop!" I said—"stop! I must be heard. Mr. Bruff! you are not related to her, and I am. *I* invite her—I summon the executors to appoint *me* guardian. Rachel, dearest Rachel, I offer you my modest home; come to London by the next train, love, and share it with me!"

Mr. Bruff said nothing. Rachel looked at me with a cruel astonishment which she made no effort to conceal.

"You are very kind, Drusilla," she said. "I shall hope to visit you whenever I happen to be in London. But I have accepted Mr. Bruff's invitation, and I think it will be best, for the present, if I remain under Mr. Bruff's care."

"Oh, don't say so!" I pleaded. "I can't part with you, Rachel,—I can't part with you!"

I tried to fold her in my arms. But she drew back. My fervour did not communicate itself; it only alarmed her.

"Surely," she said, "this is a very unnecessary display of agitation? I don't understand it."

"No more do I," said Mr. Bruff.

Their hardness—their hideous, worldly hardness—revolted me.

"Oh, Rachel! Rachel!" I burst out. "Haven't you seen *yet*, that my heart yearns to make a Christian of you? Has no inner voice told you that I am trying to do for *you*, what I was trying to do for your dear mother when death snatched her out of my hands?"

Rachel advanced a step nearer, and looked at me very strangely.

"I don't understand your reference to my mother," she said. "Miss Clack, will you have the goodness to explain yourself?"

Before I could answer, Mr. Bruff came forward, and offering his arm to Rachel, tried to lead her out of the room.

"You had better not pursue the subject, my dear," he said. "And Miss Clack had better not explain herself."

If I had been a stock or a stone, such an interference as this must have roused me into testifying to the truth. I put Mr. Bruff aside indignantly with my own hand, and, in solemn and suitable language, I stated the view with which sound doctrine does not scruple to regard the awful calamity of dying unprepared.

Rachel started back from me—I blush to write it—with a scream of horror.

"Come away!" she said to Mr. Bruff. "Come away, for God's sake, before that woman can say any more! Oh, think of my poor mother's harmless, useful, beautiful life! You were at the funeral, Mr. Bruff; you saw how everybody loved her; you saw the poor helpless people crying at her grave over the loss of their best friend. And that wretch stands there, and tries to make me doubt that my mother, who was an angel on earth, is an angel in Heaven now! Don't stop to talk about it! Come away! It stifles me to breathe the same air with her! It frightens me to feel that we are in the same room together!"

Deaf to all remonstrance, she ran to the door.

At the same moment, her maid entered with her bonnet and shawl. She huddled them on anyhow. "Pack my things," she said, "and bring them to Mr. Bruff's." I attemtped to approach her—I was shocked and grieved, but, it is needless to say, not offended. I only wished to say to her, "May your hard heart be softened! I freely forgive you!" She pulled down her veil, and tore her shawl away from my hand, and, hurrying out, shut the door in my face. I bore the insult with my customary fortitude. I remember it now with my customary superiority to all feeling of offence.

Mr. Bruff had his parting word of mockery for me, before he too hurried out, in his turn.

"You had better not have explained yourself, Miss Clack," he said, and bowed, and left the room.

The person with the cap-ribbons followed.

"It's easy to see who has set them all by the ears together," she said. "I'm only a poor servant—but I declare I'm ashamed of you!" She too went out, and banged the door after her.

I was left alone in the room. Reviled by them all, deserted by them all, I was left alone in the room.

Is there more to be added to this plain statement of facts—to this touching picture of a Christian persecuted by the world? No! my diary reminds me that one more of the many chequered chapters in my life, ends here. From that day forth, I never saw Rachel Verinder again. She had my forgiveness at the time when she insulted me. She has had my prayerful good wishes ever since. And when I die—to complete the return on my part of good for

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evil—she will have the Life, Letters, and Labours of Miss Jane Ann Stamper left her as a legacy by my will.

LIGHTING BY OXYGEN.

The experiments in lighting by oxygen lately made in the Place de l'Hôtel-de-Ville, Paris, have attracted so much attention, and have been considered so important, that a statement of their nature may be opportune. The question, in fact, is very complex, comprising, in addition to its scientific bearings, the grand consideration of economy.

Everybody knows that the ordinary gas for lighting burns, like all other combustibles, by combining with the oxygen which is one of the constituents of atmospheric air. The brightness of the light depends, at the same time, on the solid particles contained in the gas, and on the rapidity with which those particles are burnt by contact with the oxygen.

When a candle or a gas-burner is lighted in a room, the combustion is effected by means of the oxygen in the air. The oxygen, diluted by azote (another constituent of atmospheric air), does not reach the flame with sufficient rapidity and abundance to draw forth its greatest amount of brightness. The phenomenon is similar to that which occurs in a fireplace in which the fire is burning slowly. If you put on the blower, the flame becomes whiter and the flame brightens up. The reason is that, by causing a stronger draught of air, you increase the rapidity of the combustion. In a petroleum lamp the same effect is very apparent. The dingy and sooty flame becomes brilliantly white as soon as the fixing of the glass in its place has determined a strong current of air to set in.

The combustion of a flame in air takes place under unfavourable conditions. The combustible is not utilised to the full extent of which it is capable. The remedy for this is to supply the flame artificially with all the oxygen it requires, instead of leaving it to extract laboriously what it can from the atmosphere. On this clear and simple principle is based the fundamental idea of lighting by oxygen. To manufacture oxygen; to put it within reach of a combustible rich in solid matters, and so to make it give out and render its greatest illuminating power: such is the problem to be solvéd.

The proceeding is so simple and so familiar to chemists and natural philosophers, that it has almost daily been put in practice in courses of lectures and in laboratories, under one shape or another. The burning of iron-wire in a jar of oxygen is an old and familiar experiment. If, instead of burning ordinary gas and oxygen merely by their mutual contact, you insert a piece of chalk, or lime, or magnesia into the flame, the solid becomes heated and emits a light of dazzling brightness. This is the Drummond light, so called after its inventor, which, before the employment of the electric light, was used, and still frequently renders good service, in heightening the splendour of scenic effects in the principal theatres of London and Paris. For some time past endeavours have been made to utilize it for lighting purposes. The attempts, therefore, made at the Hôtel-de-Ville are far from being a novelty.

There exist at least twenty English patents and fifteen French brevets for methods of lighting by oxygen. So long back as 1834, an able natural philosopher, M. Galy Cazalat, experimented on the system in Paris. Similar attempts were repeated in 1858, in the Bois de Boulogne; in 1860, in London; and again, in 1865, by Mr. Parker, who, by substituting magnesia for chalk, considerably increased the intensity of light; in spite of which, the new mode of lighting was nowhere turned to serious account, although the light, so easily obtained, is extremely beautiful, and the object of general admiration.

The cause of its not having been adopted for public use was the high cost price of oxygen. Oxygen, as the product of the laboratory, obtained by decomposing bioxyde of manganese at an elevated temperature, could not be offered at mercantile prices. There could, therefore, be no reasonable hope of applying the Drummond light to every-day purposes. The problem, in consequence, shifted its ground; the essential point was to manufacture cheap oxygen, and every effort was turned in that direction. A distinguished chemist, M. Boussingault, of the Academy of Sciences, opened the way, by discovering a very ingenious mode of production, but unfortunately too slow to be turned to profitable account. He employs a substance known in laboratories as the bioxyde of barium; this, when heated, gives up a portion of the oxygen of which it is formed, and which it has the power of reabsorbing when subjected to a current of air previously heated to a proper temperature. To obtain oxygen, it therefore suffices to extract it from bioxyde of barium, and then to restore that substance to its primitive state; and so on, repeating the same operation. This mode of practice has its inconveniences when carried out on a large scale. M. Archereau afterwards endeavoured to obtain the same results by the decomposition of sulphuric acid.

Last year, a young chemist, M. Mallet, pointed out a process analagous to M. Boussingault's, which M. Dumas communicated to the Academy in terms of praise. It consists in heating the protochloride of copper in contact with the air. This composite substance absorbs oxygen, and is thereby transformed into an oxychloride. The temperature is then raised to four hundred degrees centigrade, and the oxychloride returns to its former condition, yielding up the oxygen. Thus, by means of a single heating, the oxygen of the atmosphere is transferred to a given mass of material, and afterwards stored in a gasometer. By this extremely ingenious method we can lay hands on

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the oxygen which flows around us, and then make it pass wherever we please.

The process at present under experiment, which is not M. Mallet's, is due to M. Tessié du Motay, and supplies oxygen at so reduced a price that it can be advantageously employed in the arts. M. du Motay resolves the problem by charging with atmospheric oxygen the substance known to chemists as manganate of soda, or potash. The oxydation is effected by directing upon the manganate a current of hot air, which transforms it into permanganate. The oxygen which the substance has absorbed is then driven out by a current of steam heated to four hundred and fifty degrees. It is the same legerdemain trick as in the preceding instance. You borrow oxygen from the air, you imprison it in a solid substance, and then you drive it into a reservoir to await your will. That is the whole secret of the operation. It is, in short, a simple transfer effected by heat—a separation of the oxygen from the azote of the atmosphere, thus giving it to us in a state of purity. The cost price of oxygen so obtained by M. du Motay is something less than sevenpence the cubic yard.

The only novelty, therefore, of the experiments at the Hôtel-de-Ville lies not, as is generally supposed, in the mode of lighting, but in the mode of extracting oxygen from the air. They have united there, in fact, miniature gas-works and a system of tubing. The gas-generator is placed in the cellars of the Assistance Publique, and the oxygen is thence conducted in tubes to the four tall candelabra which light the Place on the side of the Rue de Rivoli. Six cylindrical cast-iron retorts, about ten feet in length, are placed one over the other in a furnace, and made red hot. The first three are full of manganate of soda, the other three of permanganate of soda.

A ventilator, worked by a portable steam-engine, drives a current of hot air into the first. This air is previously freed of carbonic acid by passing through a mixture of lime and water. Here, consequently, the oxygenation is effected. The apparatus is charged with oxygen extracted from the air. On the other hand, a boiler under pressure sends a jet of steam into the three other retorts full of permanganate, that is, of oxygenised manganate; and in them, the disoxygenation takes place. The oxygen stolen from the air by the first operation is driven off, and carried away and stored in a gasometer. By thus successively treating each group of retorts by the agency of a current of air and of steam, they are charged with oxygen, which is then taken from them to be carried by tubes to its destination.

The act of lighting is thus effected. Each burner, enclosed in a lamp, is double, comprising one for the bicarbonated hydrogen and another for the oxygen, subdividing into two still narrow conduits, in order to obtain a closer contact between the gas and a small stick of compressed magnesia fixed in the middle. The introduction of the oxygen and the ordinary gas is regulated by hand, until the magnesia cylinder gives its maximum of brightness. The candelabra have each five burners. Of the beauty of the light there can be but one opinion.

Oxygen light, in fact, possesses great brilliancy, as well as fixity, even in a high wind, which is invaluable. During the storm of the eighteenth of January last, the candelabra filled with the Drummond light never ceased to shine, while candelabra holding ordinary burners were blown out one after the other. The experiment has also been continued long enough for M. Tessié du Motay's method of obtaining oxygen to be held as practically established; and this is an important fact to note, even if it were only to be applied to lighting in special cases. But for lighting purposes only, it opens a wide horizon; independent of which, it may possibly effect considerable modifications in metallurgy.

The superior brilliancy of the new mode of lighting over the old one is evident. The flame of common gas looks yellow beside the Drummond candelabra. But what is required in order to form a judgment of the real value of the new system is, to ascertain the actual cost price of the photometric unity of light. It is estimated that the oxygen light, according to the kind of burner employed, may be ten, fifteen, and even twenty times more powerful than the light of gas. There would, therefore, be manifest economy in employing it, if other elements of appreciation had not to be considered. It must not be forgotten that lighting by oxygen requires a double set of pipes and a special apparatus.

We are also too apt to confound the brightness of a light with its illuminating power. Thus, although in the Hôtel-de-Ville experiments, the magnesia cylinder, brilliant as it was, did not pain the eye, the reason was that it was raised five yards above the level of the ground, whereas, had it been at the usual height, it would have very disagreeably impressed the retina. For ordinary uses, it would be necessary to subdue the glare by the interposition of an enamelled globe—a gratuitous waste of light. A glittering point fatigues the eye and does not sufficiently disperse its luminous rays. Indeed, the principle of the dispersion of light for illumination is less generally considered than it ought to be.

The intensity of a light is of less consequence than the number of luminous points employed. In this respect, the new system is clearly inferior to the one now in operation. Shining and illuminating are very far from synonymous. Without coming to any certain conclusion, it is possible that the Drummond light, theoretically economical and superior to gas in intensity, may not present, in actual practice, the same advantages for general lighting.

M. Henri de Parville—to whom we are indebted for the substance of this article—therefore holds that it would be rash to state, as many have done, that we are on the eve of a complete revolution in our modes of lighting.

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He goes no further than to assert that M. du Motay's process simply supplies us with a luxurious method of lighting which cannot fail to be adopted here and there—in large public establishments, theatres, and hotels—but he scarcely ventures to believe that it is applicable in an exclusive manner to the public service.

We ought also to think of the danger incurred by the close neighbourhood of a couple of gases whose mixture is violently explosive. Escapes of ordinary gas cause accidents enough; escapes of oxygen and hydrogen together would considerably multiply the chances of mishap. Lastly, an escape of pure oxygen might have disastrous consequences, and cause many a smouldering spark to become a devastating fire.

Moreover, the magnesia cylinders wear up quickly; they have to be renewed at least once a week. We thus make a return, in a roundabout way, to the troublesome wick of our old-fashioned oil lamps. The inconvenience, though trifling in a private household, is serious when it extends to public lighting. The apertures which deliver the oxygen in the burners are much smaller than those for the hydrogen; hence arises considerable friction and the consequent necessity for increasing the pressure for forcing gas through tubes which may be several miles in length. Employed, however, as portable gas, oxygen may take an immediate part in domestic lighting. Experimental lamps, tried at the Tuileries by the Emperor's order, have been crowned with complete success.

While the experiments at the Hôtel-de-Ville were being organised, M. Bourbouze, a gentleman attached to the Faculty of Sciences, was making essays which promise not less important results than M. du Motay's invention. The result obtained will bear comparison with the Drummond light, while the mode of production is much more simple. M. Bourbouze does not employ pure oxygen; he consequently avoids the dangers and inconveniences of the other system.

We have already stated that the intensity of a light depends on the activity of the combustion, on the quantity of oxygen supplied, and the quickness of the jet. M. Bourbouze, instead of supplying the flame with pure oxygen, subdivides the combustible into fine threads, bathes it in a great quantity of air, and wire-draws it, as it were, by means of air swiftly urged through holes of small diameter. He thus obtains effects analogous to those produced by the combustion of pure oxygen.

His process is this. He causes ordinary gas and air to enter a close vessel. The mixture thus obtained, passing through a plate pierced with a great number of holes, is subdivided into a multitude of little jets. These jets reach the under surface of a piece of cloth made of platina wire, and are not set fire to till they have traversed the cloth. The metallic tissue is not of the ordinary pattern, it having been found preferable to substitute for a *cloth*, properly so called, a veritable crochet stitch. This cloth (like the stick of magnesia in the Drummond light) under the influence of heat, becomes first red, and then white, finally emitting a dazzling light. In order to drive the mixture through the little holes, recourse is had to a pressure equal to a column of mercury thirty-two inches high. M. Bourbouze estimates the economy of his system to be at least fifteen per cent.

Be it remarked here that the metallic cloth prevents all danger of explosion, and protects the detonating mixture from the burning flame, exactly as the wire-cloth in Davy's lamp keeps the light within it from setting fire to the fire-damp without.

IN THE INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO.

Away in the Far East, dividing the Indian from the Pacific Ocean, and making a chain of volcanic islands between China and Australia, lies the great Asiatic Archipelago. European energy and enterprise have done something with these islands—to wit, Borneo, Java, and Sumatra—but more remains to be accomplished; and it is to be hoped that the Anglo-Saxon hand will make its mark felt before any other can take its place.

The most extensive volcanic band in the world runs through the Archipelago, taking a part of Sumatra, all Java, and the chain of islands to the east of it, most of the Moluccas or the Clove Islands, a small part of Celebes, and much of the Philippines. There are nearly fifty volcanoes in active operation, besides numbers which have become extinct. In 1815 there was a tremendous eruption from the Tomboro mountain in Sumbawa, the fifth island of the Sunda chain, which is said to have destroyed twelve thousand people; but there are continual outbursts from all the working volcanoes, which keep the inhabitants in a lively state of alarm. The more civilised inhabitants of this island of Sumbawa are the Mohammedans; but the mountaineers, are what they always were; though the followers of the prophet try to convert them to the true faith by going through their villages with whips and rods in their hands, crying out, "Dogs! do you wish to pray or not?"

Those who profess themselves converted wear a scrap of cotton handkerchief on their heads, eat pork only in secret, and build their houses after the pattern of the inhabitants of the plain. But they put their confidence in their stone idols just the same as before, and the inner man is untouched though the public faith may be altered.

Going back to volcanoes, there is a most singular volcanic phenomenon in Grobogan. This is a perfectly level and circular mass of black mud, about sixteen feet in diameter, and situated in the centre of the limestone district, which every two or three, or sometimes four or five, seconds rises to the height of about twenty or thirty feet, then explodes with a dull noise, and

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scatters a volume of black mud in every direction. The exploded mud is warm, and the explosions are most frequent and forcible during the rainy season. Round about this central pond of mud are the brine springs, which yield an immense quantity of common salt, and which force themselves through apertures in the earth "with some violence and ebullition." The salt-makers' village and the central pond of volcanic mud are both known to the Javanese as Kuwu—"the place of abode"—and an old legend makes the spot to be the place of abode of a monster snake, whose writhings create the eruption.

The Javanese are famous for their pictorial vocabulary. One district is "Prosperity," another "The Country of Ghosts," a third is "The Unlucky," a fourth "Heroic Difficulty;" their great volcano—the formidable Ringgit—is "The Puppet;" an island is "The Land of Sorrows," another "Palm-wine Island," another "Sea Island," another "The Fallen," another "The Magic Island;" one river is "The Golden," and a second is "The Bachelor's River;" one river-mouth is "Coco-palm Mouth," another "The Mouth of Sobs;" an eclipse is the "sickness" of the sun or moon, as may be; the nobles and the people are "the whole and the broken grains of rice," or "the head and the foot;" and history, or rather romance, is "clearing land of forest;" for indeed their history is nothing but romance—a mere collection of legends, of no more value than the North American Indian's or the Fiji Islander's.

In the practical arts metal-working is their chief excellence, and they give the first place to the blacksmith, or rather to the cutler, in their hierarchy of labour. He is the "cunning," or the "skilful," and the respect in which he is held takes us back to the days of Wayland Smith; or, further still, to the times when the best metal forger was a god, and was given for wife the exquisite Goddess of Beauty. The Javanese cutler's finest production is the kris, or dagger, which has four different names and a hundred different forms. Every man and every boy of fourteen wears at least one kris as part of his ordinary dress; and men of rank wear two and sometimes four. The ladies, too, of high rank wear one; and some of the older weapons are assumed to be charmed, and, when sold, as they sometimes are by chance, fetch immense prices. In brass work they succeed best in gongs and musical instruments; their carpentry, or what we should call cabinet-work, is very beautiful, but they do not come up to the Sumatran standard in gold work.

The Javanese and the Sumatrans are of the same race, the Malayan, so that they ought to be alike; but there are wonderful natural dissimilarities between the two islands, though divided by a narrow channel only. Thus, the elephant and the tapir of Sumatra have no existence in Java; the orang-outang is Sumatran and not Javanese; the Sunda ox is Javanese and not Sumatran; the Argus pheasant of Sumatra does not exist in Java, nor the pea-fowl, the rhinoceros, or the sloth of Java in Sumatra; the teak-tree, which is abundant in Java, is not found in Sumatra; and the dragon's-blood,* ratan, is peculiar to Sumatra. It is strange to see these differences within so short a distance and under the same physical conditions; but there are analogous instances nearer home, and human faculties and natural productions are both capricious and partial all the world over. Another instance of this partiality in human characteristics is the rarity in Java of the amuk, or running a-muck, as we call it, so general throughout all the Indian Archipelago, and specially characteristic of the Malay race. It seems to be a kind of madness, always connected, more or less intimately, with the liver and the digestive organs, but though common everywhere else throughout the Archipelago, it is exceedingly rare in Java; which fact alone shows some great diversity of nature and some national differences hard to be accounted for.

Most of the people of the Archipelago are Mohammedans, having been converted twice over, once to Hindûism, and again to Mohammedanism. But a few tribes still cling to the older faith, and among these are the people of Bali, the next island east of Java, and divided from it by a strait not exceeding a mile and a half in breadth. And, being Hindûs, these people of Bali make away with their dead in a different manner from the rest of the Archipelagians. The Mohammedan Malays bury theirs, coffinless, unshrouded, within twenty-four hours after death; "and the word which expresses this simple ceremony," says Crawfurd, "literally signifies to place in the earth, and is the same which means to plant or put seed in the ground." The grave is without stone or tomb, save in the cases of kings and saints; the tombs of which last are holy; and the cemeteries are usually on the uplands or small hills near the villages.

The Kayan Dyaks of Borneo, being neither

* "This colouring substance (dragon's blood) is a granular matter adhering to the ripe fruit of a species of ratan, Calamus draco, and obtained by beating or threshing the fruit in little baskets. Within the archipelago the principal place of production is Jambi, on the north-eastern side of Sumatra. The plant is the wild produce of the forest, and not cultivated, although some care is taken to preserve it from destruction. The collectors of dragon's blood are the wild people called Kubu, who dispose of it to the Malays at a price not much exceeding a shilling a pound. The whole quantity produced in Jambi is said to be about one thousand hundredweights. This article is often adulterated by a mixture of damar (resin). The best kind imported into Europe in seeds is manipulated by the Chinese. The canes of the male plant used in former times to be exported to Batavia, and very probably formed the 'true Jambees' commemorated in the Spectator as the most fashionable walking-sticks in the reign of Queen Anne."—Crawfurd's Dictionary of the Indian Islands.

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Mohammedans nor Hindùs, dispose of their dead after their own fashion. They keep them from four to eight days, and even longer: the climate being hot, it must be remembered, and decomposition rapid. After the first day they put the corpse into a coffin scooped out of the trunk of a tree, and carved more or less richly according to the means of the family; day and night lights are placed at each side of the coffin, and if they chance to get extinguished it is considered most unlucky; also, for four or five days after the corpse has been removed, torches are kept alight in the place where it had laid. Before its removal a feast is prepared, part of the food being given to the dead body, while the relations eat the remainder. When the body is taken away, although then in a frightful state of decomposition, the women hang about the coffin, pressing their faces against it, and hugging it affectionately; and this they do until it reaches its final destination—a small wooden house or stage about twelve feet high from the ground, supported on four wooden posts. The tombs of the chiefs are built of hard wood, supported by nine massive posts from twelve to fourteen feet high, and all elaborately carved. Flowering shrubs and creepers are generally planted about these aërial tombs, and soon grow up round the posts and coffins, rendering decay beautiful and concealing death by life.

The Balinese, on the contrary, being Hindùs, burn their dead; and the widows may choose between being burned with their departed lords, or being killed by the dagger. The wives of the rajahs, however, must be burned with their dead husbands; and when a rajah dies some women, if only slaves, are always burned with him. The wives of the priests never kill themselves. The description of the sacrifices is too horrible to be given here. There is something peculiarly ghastly in the mixture of beauty, youth, and death; of flowers and incense, and costly garments, with the flow of blood from a triplet of death wounds, and the last cries of the victim stifled by the scented smoke of the funeral pyre. It is such an awful sacrifice of young and vivid life for worse than nothing, that we do not care to dwell on it.

Dyak, or more correctly Dayak, is the generic term used by the Malays for all the wild tribes of Sumatra and Celebes, but more especially for those of Borneo, where they are most numerous. It seems to be their equivalent for our "savage." The various tribes of Dyaks in Borneo are in different stages of civilisation; some are nomads, living on fruits and such wild animals as they can catch; others have fixed dwellings — great barn-like huts where many families live together—cultivate corn and roots, rear the cotton plant, spin and weave it, manufacture malleable iron and steel, and breed swine, fowls, and dogs, but no beast of burden. They know nothing of letters, for they have neither invented alaphabetic signs for themselves, nor adopted those of others; and into what tribes soever they may be subdivided they are all of the one true Malayan race—brown, short, and with lank hair. When they go to war, they clothe themselves in the skins of wild beasts, generally of the black bear; the rajah having a tiger's skin as his version of the royal purple. These skins are put over the head, and effectually cover the breast and back, leaving the arms naked. They are sword and spear proof; also proof against the arrows of the sumpitan, or the blow-pipe; and, with a shield made of light wood covered with skin, are tolerably good protection against native modes of warfare. But these Dyaks fight like furies. They have no idea of fear, and resist till they are cut to pieces. The temper of their cutlasses is such that an ordinary man can cut through a musket barrel at a blow. In fighting they always strike and seldom thrust; but, brave as they are in their own way, the bravest among them will shrink at the idea of firearms. They no sooner hear the report of a musket than they run deep into the jungle: if they are in their boats they jump into the water and rush to shore. The most rational have a superstitious dread of firearms. Each thinks the bullet is making directly towards him; and as they have not the least notion of the range of firearms, so long as they can hear the report they think themselves in danger. If they are out with Europeans on shooting parties, having advanced so far on the way of wisdom as to understand that aiming at monkeys is not aiming at themselves, they will ask the sportsman to aim at birds a mile distant, and think him illnatured if he refuses. If he fires, and they see the bird fly away uninjured, they never consider it as a miss, being sure that the bullet will follow and eventually overtake it.

Their most valuable trophies are human heads, which they preserve by smoking over a fire, and which have all sorts of wonderful powers and properties. They are not only signs of prowess and victory, but they are necessary adjuncts in the ceremonials at marriages and funerals, and in births and in sickness. Nothing can be done without fresh heads, which propitiate the evil spirits of disease, specially of small-pox. Physic is folly compared with a human head, smoke-dried and brainless, for the healing of pustules and the destruction of fever; and there is no suffering and no danger that a Dyak will not face for the reward of a single head: male head be it understood,—women and children count for nothing. Indeed the women are seized as slaves by the victors, and like slaves soon accommodate themselves to circumstances, and take kindly to their change of masters. These Dyaks are terrible fellows for midnight attacks; and go down the river in their long canoes as swiftly as birds would skim on the water. If pulling up the stream, they keep close to the bank, and as they cover their paddles with the soft bark of trees no noise whatever is made. After paddling all night they pull up the boat among the overhanging trees and jungle, so that there is no trace or sign of their existence. Here they sleep

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and feed on snakes, monkeys, or anything else they can kill with their blow-pipes; if the chief wants food, if he wants meat that is, and cannot get it by these means, one of his followers is killed and cooked; which not only solaces the hungry stomach of the great man, but gives him a head into the bargain. They commence the attack on the doomed village by throwing lighted fire-balls on the thatch of the huts, which immediately involve the whole in flames; they then raise the war cry, and the work of murder begins. Not a man is spared; each as he descends the ladder of his dwelling to escape from the flames, "which give just light enough to distinguish a man from a woman," is speared or cut down with the cutlass; the women and children are seized as they endeavour to escape; the great object being to prevent information finding its way to the other villages, so that there shall be no possible warning of the misery and slaughter at hand. In this manner the raid continues; and the victorious chief returns with his boat-load of heads, women and children—the latter for slaves.

Many delicious fruits and beautiful flowers, as well as forest trees and spice trees, grow in these Indian islands. Of the fruits the mangostin is the best, according to European notions; though, to the native, the durian is the one incomparable. It is a little odd that the same genus of tree, the garcinia, which produces this most exquisite fruit, produces also one of the most drastic and acrid of substances. Gamboja, a corruption of the Malay name of the chief country which produces it—Kamboja—is the yellow inspissated sap of the young gamboge tree, obtained by wounding the bark; and it seems to be one of those strange bits of compensation found throughout all nature, that the mangostin fruit and the drastic juice gamboge, should be of the same genus. The mango is also an Archipelagian fruit, the varieties of which differ as widely as pears and apples here in England. Then there is the pomegranate, which, however, is an exotic, and which bears the same name as the ruby; but the fruit is so poor that it ought to come under the head of flowers. The guava is another fruit, which we care for more as a preserve than when freshly gathered, but which the natives prize highly; they class it with the jambu, calling one kind the seedy jambu, another the Chinese jambu, and so on. Limes, sweet limes, and shaddocks or pumplenooses grow in abundance through the islands. Oranges—the sweet orange proper—are generally inferior to those of the Azores, the south of Europe, and the north of India; but there is a sweet orange with a green thick skin adhering closely to the pulp, that is very delicious; and the mandarin orange, which attains perfection only at some three thousand feet above the sea level, is of first-rate quality. The shaddock—the tiger or Batavian orange—when carefully cultivated, is far superior to any grown elsewhere. Coco palms abound; and of the bread-fruit, the artocarpus or jack-fruit, there are three kinds, all good.

There are plenty of fancy woods in the Archipelago. Sandal wood; ebony or "charwood;" satin wood; the petrospermum Indicum, which gives those beautiful little blocks known as Amboyna or Kyabucca wood; the speckled woods of the wood palm—these are the best known and the most used in Europe. The palm family is, as always, one of the most useful of the whole forest. First in importance comes the coco palm, and then the gomuti, or brassus gomuti, which does a great many things. In the first place its sap gives sugar and an intoxicating beverage; then, between the trunk and the fronds are found, first, a black horse-hair like substance, which makes the best cordage of the western islands of the Archipelago; second, a fine cottony substance which makes the best tinder, and which is exported for tinder; and, third, "strong stiff spines from which are made the pens of all the nations that write on paper, with the arrows of the blow-pipe of the rude tribes that still use this weapon." The pith gives an inferior kind of sago. The seeds have been made into a confection. Their pulpy envelope abounds in a poisonous juice—a strong infusion of which is used in the wars. The Dutch call the juice "hell-water." There are other kinds of palms beside this and the coco palm; but there is not space for a full description of them within our present limits.

There are plenty of spice trees in the Archipelago—nutmegs and camphor trees, clove trees, &c.; while rice, tobacco, and the sugar cane, safflower for a dye, capsicums, ginger, the coffee plant, and the cacao or theobroma, bananas and batatas, yams, maize, the gluga or paper mulberry tree, the abaca or textile banana, and the piña or pineapple leaf for grass cloths, cassia, cinnamon, and pepper, are just a few of the gifts and graces of these favoured islands. There are metals too, richly if partially distributed; but only four—iron, tin, copper, and gold; there are diamonds and coal fields (coal is "earth charcoal" in Javanese); there are sweet-scented gums like benzoin, and magic stones like the bezoar; there is ambergris from the sperm whale, and civet from the viverra; there are birds of paradise, or bird of the gods, as the native name goes; magnificent fowls, pigeons, parrots, peacocks, but they are all dispersed in different localities. For the Asiatic Archipelago makes a wide tract altogether, and climate, customs, productions, and races vary, as must necessarily be the case in so large an extent of land, made larger yet in range by the intervening tracts of ocean.

There seem to be about five races of man in the Archipelago—the Malays proper, the Sâmang or dwarf negroes of the Malay Peninsula, the Negritos or Aetas of the Philippines, the large negroes or Papuas of New Guinea, and a race intermediate between these last and the Malayan, called by Crawfurd the Negro-Malay. The Malays proper are of course the superior

race and the more civilised people. They occupy the whole of the Malay Peninsula, save where a few wandering Negritos claim precarious subsistence and temporary lodging. They have half Sumatra and all the sea-coast of Borneo, and are computed to be about a million and a half strong in Borneo, a quarter of a million in the Malay Peninsula, and about a million in Sumatra. They are a short squat people, with round faces, wide mouths, high cheek bones, short small noses, black, small, deep-seated eyes. Their hair is lank, black, and harsh, and they have little or no beard. The Sâmangs are a dwarfed, low-class negro race. The Negritos or Aetas of the Philippines are also short, but well made and active, the nose a little less flattened, soft frizzled hair, a skin less dark, and features more regular than those of the African negro. The Spanish expression is "less black and less ugly." The Papuas of New Guinea are also true negroes, and are the most respectable of all the woolly-haired race, having made some advances in civilisation, though still below the aboriginal inhabitants of Borneo. The Negro-Malays seem to hold an intermediate place between the Malays and the Papuas, being darker than the former and fairer than the latter, with frizzled hair growing all over the head, not in separate tufts, and with more the appearance of South Sea Islanders than of either the negroes or the Malays. Perhaps they are the next step to the Polynesians. Nature seems to go by strangely definite stages of progression, and as in New Guinea we come to the first expression of the marsupials, the pouched animals so eminently characteristic of Australia and New Zealand, so in the Negro-Malays Nature may have been trying her "'prentice hand" on a new combination of atoms, something different from her Malayan sons and yet not quite like her negro offspring—a transition race, in fact—to see what kind of creatures the new pattern would make.

A PRINCE'S HOLIDAY.

I. A STEEPLE-CHASE.

Having seen the gayest of processions flash by, and having roared ourselves hoarse in shouting at—that is welcoming—the interesting young pair who have come to see a certain green island, we go to rest, and are up in time to rush down to the steeple-chase—Irish Derby—twenty miles away. This is a very happy shape of entertainment to welcome noble guests to the land of Charles O'Malley and of the great strong horses which cross country and take five-barred gates, and "top" walls with ease and enjoyment. Others have the conventional "laying the first stone," and Stubbly Volunteer's review, with the Stubbly ball in the evening; we offer the wares in which we are strongest, and in which we have some little credit. We are, besides, to have a week of galas, special of their kind, and an Installation, that is to be as sumptuously theatrical, in its way, as a little coronation. Such is the fancy of our nation. We like any verging on dresses and decorations—we would not part with our court for the world.

To get down to the steeple-chase—Punchestown! a name inviting to both rider and horses—is a matter of almost appalling difficulty. To find a large railway terminus wholly given up to a crushing, shouting mob, frantically fighting for tickets, and taking them up in the air, clutching a partition which has been scaled; with ladies screaming and fainting, and betting roughs fighting, seems scarcely promising of entertainment. But the rush for trains is yet worse; and it is not a little dispiriting, though amusing enough for the non-combatant, to see train after train pass away slowly, every compartment packed closely, with people standing, sitting, and lying on each other; luggage vans, horse boxes, all packed in the same herring fashion, so much so that the lid of the cask cannot be made to shut them in tight—and they go off with doors flapping. Some one at last turning frantic at being left behind seven or eight times, and thinking it highly probable that he will be thus abandoned seven or eight times more, climbs to the roof, an example speedily followed, and thus by so happy a device a double freight is secured. As this heavy load trails away out of the station, it seems transformed into a mass of grinning, chattering faces, actually enjoying their cribbed and cabined situation, and shrieking and hooping with delight. Perhaps the sense of their own private discomfort, which will presently be horrible, is overborne by the delight of comtemplating the lines of rueful faces left on the desert island, gazing with a miserable despondency, while the others glide away triumphant. Those hanging on behind, standing on the buffers, shout and yell with delight, while a few, grown frantic at the spectacle, take a leap, harlequin-like, and shoot bodily through the open window, and arrive headforemost in the packed mass within, who, willing to cast them out, are yet afraid to do so from the danger. Separate engines are out on their own responsibility; some crowded with smiling ladies, all tulle and bournous, in the hope of "picking up a train" somewhere along the line, while a gallant *militaire* or two, in all the glory of veils and speckless dust coats, is actually lying on the great pile of coals heaped in the tender. In fact the whole line near the station is given up to the populace, who swarm and surge, and go off in great masses to meet and carry by escalade the returning empty trains, which thus always arrive laden, and with swarms of human ants clinging to the steps and windows.

At last all the world has got down. Here is the course, said to be the prettiest one of the breakneck order in the kingdom; for nature and art have happily combined to furnish it with all the known choice morsels of danger, en masse as it were, and which, to other places, are distributed with but a niggard hand. The

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day is of the loveliest—a true "ladies' day"—the country a charming corner. There is plenty of local colour. It is in a green and rich country, undulating, rising here into hills, falling there, pretty to look at, as a mere view, with a pleasant range of grey hills in the distance. The day is an Italian day, the air balmy and delicious. Who does not recal the glitter of a course, the "mother-of-pearl" sparkle from bright bonnets and brighter faces, and gayer dresses, that seem to shine and glisten like feld spar under a strong sun: the dark irregular fringe made up of carriages, which meanders and straggles afar off, and marks the line of the course—with the "drags," temporary temples of opulence, locomotive stands, in their way, and whose real function now seems to be established. They are luxurious race club-houses and buffets, stored with all the good things of earth and air. But we have besides local colouring in the cars of the country, which swarm, drawn by every known pattern of horse, and which can insinuate themselves in all sorts of clefts and passages between the greater monsters. At such a scene and on such an occasion, the spirit of gaiety and enjoyment seems to be enlarged, under the best conditions, and with her rosy pinions flutters all day long to and fro.

Now it is full time, rather, a good bit after time; but we are none of your stop-watch philosophers to-day. At the little modest station, some four miles away, have been waiting royal and vice-regal carriages—the scarlet outriders so familiar to Ascot, and the gentlemen of the hunt in their cheerful scarlet, and the green-coated police. At last there is a cloud of dust, and a roar—a surging of the multitude, and an avenue opens. First the mounted police, clattering and jingling, native soldiery of the place, the green hussars of the country. Then the scarlet stewards of the hunt; then the vice-king of the country; popular and admired for his magnificence, and style, and sporting taste; for his banquets and balls, and perhaps for his own good looks, and perhaps, again, for those fine black horses which draw his carriages and carry his outriders. Then noblemen and gentlemen, aides-de-camp riding, and a master of the horse; then scarlet liveries and royal outriders, and then the pleasant young pair, seen for the first time by thousands of the honest Irish peasants. Then rise the shouts and the waving of hats; then, too, it is seen that the fair and delicate princess's dress is of pale green, and *that* completes the victory. On they go amid a swelling chorus, gathering as it rises, and which utterly drowns a low hiss or two, which a few ill-looking but baffled Fenians try to make heard. There are criticisms. "Nice lookin' craythur!" and "O, Biddy, did *you see the gown on her?*" Then do prince and princess appear on the grand stand amid its glass and scarlet, and which is, indeed, more like an opera-box than a stand. They become introduced, as it were, to the world en masse, and the air is again rent.

Then the racing begins. Competent judges have pronounced it a very pretty course, with "double ditch," and stone walls, and natural fences, and banks, and every obstacle that could be desired. English bookmakers complain that there is no money to be got; but the truth is the horses are mostly "dark," ridden by their owners, or gentlemen friends, and their merits are only known to a select few. Certainly the few seconds of a race, the flashing by to hollow pounding, the glittering of specks in the distance—now seen behind the trees, now lost to view, now reappearing over the line of the hedge, now drawing nearer to us, nearer and yet nearer—all to a roar of voices, gradually increasing as they draw near, and come sweeping past the stand in a rush, with the crowd closing in behind—this spectacle has, for its length, more excitement crowded into it than any other. The course, we note, is kept in a pleasant, dégagé, lounging fashion; and I observe that people are so eager to see the "big Lep" over the stone wall, that they scramble eagerly up on it. When they see the horses charging at it "full tilt," the parti-coloured arms of the jockeys, well squared and sawing at their horses in the usual characteristic manner, a panic seems to seize them, and they turn round in a wild manner to see how they are to get down. Paddy, in the frieze coat, has been left in charge of the "Lep," with a light stick, and grows frantic. "Get down, every mothers' son av yes! D'ye see the harses comin'? Ah, you Bundhoon, you!" This was addressed to one of his own rank, who, indignant at the insult, turns round under the wall to resent it, but hears the coming thunder on the other side, and darts back, only in time. The ardent amateurs are flying in all directions; but one unhappy woman is caught, and ridden over. One skilful artist here shows his jockeyship; for his horse trips at this jump, but recovers, nearly sending the rider over his head, who luckily catches his horse's neck, and hangs on literally at one side. The horse rushes on, the rider tries gallantly to save himself, and, after hovering some seconds "between the stirrup and the ground," and failing in two or three attempts, at last lands gallantly in the saddle, to a cheer from the applauding crowd.

By this time the race is over, carriages and drags burst open as if they were hampers themselves, and give up meats, and salads, and champagnes, and all the delicacies of the earth; and when the great race named in honour of the royal guest of the day is over the sun has begun to decline, and it is time to depart. But now everything looks different. Moistened eyes see everything with a heated and obstreperous loyalty. So, when the procession is again formed, and the royal lady in green passes by, the progress is indeed tumultuous and triumphant. A vast number of unrecognised aides-de-camp insist on making part of the procession, and rush by the side of the carriage, their hands on the door, waving their hats and caubeens in the face of the object of this homage, and bellowing loyal cries. The effusion is supreme — alarming

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almost. The contrast between that fair and delicate creature thus invaded, and the flushed and delighted faces, is almost ludicrous. But it was meant well and heartily. Since the great day of London-bridge there has been no such welcome for her as at Punchestown. With that we all begin to disperse and get home as best, or rather as worst, we can—that is, on the engine, among the coals, in the horse-boxes and cattle-vans, and, more agreeably, on the tops of the carriages.

II. THE INSTALLATION.

The old cathedral, where the great dean was in office—and where the large, dark, saturnine face had often been seen in the choir reading the offices, while that tremendous soul within was preying on itself, wasting with rage and disappointment at exile and neglect—was for long, a tottering decrepit pile, broken down, awry, and propped up with crutches. Lately came a large-hearted and generous man, with a stout cheque-book, the best medicine of the day, which brings health, strength and beauty, and gave back to the decaying veteran new limbs, new bones, and new skin, and new blood. It now almost challenges notice from a jaunty and spick and span air. Here are the stalls of the knights of St. Patrick—the swords and banners and relics of the good old pre-union days, when there was a great deal of pleasant theatrical spirit abroad, and a taste for glitter, and for shows and processions.

Here is a strange old quarter, a very rookery, a nest of narrow old streets, of squalid lanes, of ruined houses, and mean alleys, which in those old days were once "fashionable" and select, and, like reduced gentlemen, have sunk into degradation and necessities lower than any which would have befallen the regular poor. To this quarter it has been decided to bring our prince in a procession, the like of which has not been known within the memory of man, and to make an Irish knight of him with a pomp and splendour that shall long be talked of. Again the day is bright, the sun shining, and that pleasant feel is abroad over every one, the result of fine weather and good spirits combined with a show. For months preparations have been going on—and now at last all is ready.

The city has very much the air of a foreign town. There are ambitious buildings in the Greek manner, and little breaks and vistas, irregular and highly picturesque. The grim manufacturing element is far away. On this festival all the streets are lined with soldiery, and from the gate of the rather gloomy castle, down the steep hill which leads from it, on by the old Parliament House, by the College, the squares, the huge St. Stephen's green, appears this broad scarlet avenue, with its sparkling silver bayonet fringe. On the outer edge clusters the usual coarser black fringe of the commonalty. All business is stopped, all carriages save those going to the show, must retire into back places. There is the roar and hum of expectancy, the distant braying of military music passing on afar off, including the great orchestra of the guards, whose tuneful strains have made many a twinkling foot move to music so pleasant. There are the usual false alarms when a general or an inferior player is taken for the principal. At last it comes—a stately procession, soldiers, carbineers, lancers, a dozen of state carriages, liveries blazing with gold and scarlet, and goes by in a roar and a shout that is passed on, and which to the persons thus saluted must seem to be one prolonged cheer from the first starting point to the last. But as it begins to trail through the squalid Ghetto—the narrow network of streets that lead to the cathedral—the hill and dale slums that cluster about it, conceive the amazement of the inhabitants of this quarter at such an august invasion! From the windows of the cracked and tottering houses, where the view is not impeded by clothes hung out to dry, look out unkempt heads packed close; while below cluster thickly an immense throng of the unwashed commonalty. Poor souls, it is long since they have been so disturbed in their half savage retreats, and, above all, so dazzled by the cluster of superior mortals who have been coming and going all this month. And now the bearskins appear, and the lines of soldiery have made their way down, lining these Seven Dials, as they might be called—a great day for Ireland, indeed!

Inside the pale yellow cathedral, all is ready, with all in their places, waiting—a scarlet pathway from end to end, between two vast banks of human flowers, potted and bedded there without crush or confusion; gay bonnets, and laces, and dresses, and ribbons, fluttering in the sun, and dotted with scarlet—every one seated, every one waiting. The colours, the faces, the shifting of tones, with the pale-blue colour of the Order; the thrones and canopy, the galleries where the musicians are, and the distant view, through an arch, of the chapel where the chapter is to meet, all unite to please the eye. Every one of note and every dignitary is there—English, Scotch, and native. Here are the peeresses in their own department, the wives of the knights of the Order; judges in scarlet and ermine, chancellors in gold and black; privy councillors with gold laid on in rich splashes and daubs; soldiers' uniforms in profusion—all clustered according to their degree; strangers from all parts; Lord Mayor of London and other civic potentates; English bishops, English earls and nobles; and in a place of honour, the "skilful Irishman" who has seen and described more gaudy shows than any one in the world—from a coronation at Moscow to a marriage at Windsor—and whose picturesque touch will presently draw the whole scene for the most important journal in Europe.

At last! Now we, so long in restraint, so patiently waiting, hear the faint sounds of martial music, far away and drawing near; with

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the more stirring strain of lively cheering; now we, who have a good view, glance down to the great door, where the curtains have been drawn up, and see the flitting by of many figures against the daylight. Now, at last, a strong corps of trumpeters make their instruments blare—a flourish that echoes down the nave and floats up again. Now the organ, and the drums, and trumpets, and voices break out, and one of the most picturesque processions conceivable begins to come up slowly; seeming to gather as it goes by, in magnificence—beginning with humble retainers, beadles, and vergers, and sober colours, and becoming gradually gorgeous and golden. Soldiers, maces, "household" in the golden robin-redbreast coat; the "Esquires," great Life-guardsmen and guardsmen, two to each knight, and the knights themselves—noblemen of the best blood in the land, their sky-blue mantles sweeping behind them, their stars glittering. Then the genius of the whole—"Ulster"—who rules the heraldic world, unrivalled in a pageant of this sort, supported by his two assistants. No one so skilled in *those* mysteries—so firm, yet so courteous. Then the Grand Master, the stately Viceroy—a true Hamilton—his train carried by Gainsborough blue boys—three miniature little noblemen, in slashed satin doublets and trunks; then the state sword, carried by a nobleman; then the prince's cloak and sword, carried by more esquires; then the Postulant himself, and, finally, the great ladies whom the English Earl of Shrewsbury, becoming here "Grand Seneschal of Ireland," has marshalled. So they continued to pass by for many minutes into the chapter-room.

Then, after some formalities, they emerge again; and, to some pretty and dramatic organ music, the ceremony goes on. Every knight passes to his stall; in front of him stand his two esquires, over his head his own banner and sword. Then the new knight is brought to the Grand Master, and kneels before him while the sword is girded on and the blue robe and collar are adjusted. Other blue mantles cluster round, and archbishops read the mystic forms. The most picturesque moment is when the esquire stands in the middle and unfurls the knight's gaudy banner, swinging it in defiance, and the trumpets twang out a cheerful blast, and Ulster, coming to the front, proclaims the style and titles of "the most puissant" knight. Best of heralds!

Then it begins to pass away. The tall knights and their squires, the little blue pages, supplemented by more, to bear up the new knight's train; the dignified Grand Master; the three brilliant ladies in snowy white; the pale lady in deep blue, who is most of all interested, vanish in succession. It seems like a soft dream, and we are sorry the spell has been broken. It looks like going back to a mediæval time; yet there were few there to whom it seemed such. With so much poetry going out of the world, it was pleasant to have such a relic left. Even a doctrinaire would have been moved. It may have disturbed the grim ghost of the great dead dean. But to the crowd, Celtic and perfervid, it was deeply and poetically interesting.

EASTER MONDAY AT PORTSMOUTH.

It is not a pleasant thing to go to bed knowing that by four o'clock next morning you must not only be up and dressed, but actually at a railway station which is some two and a half miles off. It is not pleasant to wake again and again, as I did on the night of last Easter Sunday, each time believing that you have overslept yourself, and that you will be too late for the train by which, and by which only, you have any chance of getting a place. It is still further from pleasant—no matter how much you may "make believe" that it is not unpleasant—to get up at three A.M. on a cold north-windy morning, to dress as best you can by candlelight, to break your fast upon some coffee which is half cold, half sediment, and wholly bad. Least of all is it pleasant to find yourself at four A.M. shivering on the platform of the Victoria Station, and to find out that, what between the military and the volunteer authorities, you, being a mere civilian, have no more chance of getting away by the train which you suffered so much to be in time for, than you have of being made Archbishop of Canterbury or Lord Mayor of London.

May every blessing through life attend upon that railway official—I don't know whether he was a simple porter, or the station-master, or the chairman of the Board of Directors, but a man in authority over others (saying to this guard, "Come," and he came, and to that driver, "Go," and he went)—may every blessing in life, and, as a Spaniard once added to me, "the advantages of a happy death," attend upon that man. He saw my forlorn, unbrushed-up, and non-volunteer appearance, and asked me whether I was not "a gentleman connected with the press," to which I replied, with a most unblushing untruth, that I was. He then hustled me forward, pushed me back, shoved me to the right, pulled me to the left, spoke some words to a very pompous military man (all cocked-hat and Piccadilly weepers), who looked at me as if I was many degrees more inferior than nothing, and at last got me into a first-class railway carriage, into which then poured five gallant volunteers, with their muskets, pouch-boxes, havresacks, and heaven knows what besides. And a more cheery set of travelling companions it was never my lot to journey with. They all seemed to know each other, and, although evidently surprised at my being amongst them, were as kind and hearty as if I had been one of themselves. They asked me no questions.—I believe they took me to be some railway magnate going down with them to see that every thing was properly managed. And as they did not interrogate me, I did the same by them. I did not even ask them the name of their corps. One or two of

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them had flasks of the most undeniable pale brandy it was ever my good luck to come across, to which they made me most welcome. I think I must have had three or four good pulls out of their various flasks. One of the party had an immense cigar-case, filled with as excellent cigars as ever were smoked, and which he pressed on me before I fell into a doze, which lasted all the way to Portsmouth, when I was awoke by the train stopping, and the whole party tumbling out to look for their corps and make what arrangements they could for breakfast.

Still more than half asleep, I made my way to a small inn, which I rather think was a private house doing duty for the day as a place where breakfast was to be procured for a consideration.

Very good the breakfast was, and very reasonable the consideration—only one and sixpence. My inward man refreshed with food, and my outward person invigorated with a wash, I felt quite another being, and set out to make what observations I could respecting the Great Volunteer Review of 1868.

Whatever our railway system may have been formerly, it certainly left little to be desired on Easter Monday last. It was about eight A.M. when the train in which I had obtained a seat reached Portsmouth, and two hours later the whole great army of volunteers had assembled in the town. My sleepiness got rid of, I took some pains to ascertain the number of men under arms, and found that, including nearly two thousand regular infantry and about eight hundred regular artillery, they amounted in all to a fraction less than thirty thousand, with fifty-two guns—a force by no means insignificant, even if our great naval seaport and arsenal had to be defended from the attack of a real living enemy.

Taking them individually, nothing could be better or more workman-like looking than the great majority of the volunteers; it was, to my eye at least, only when they were brought together that their imperfections showed forth, and these were by no means of a very serious nature. The immense variety of uniforms amongst them, the smallness of some of the corps, and the immense comparative size of some of their bands, are faults which these gallant fellows might—or rather which the authorities ought—to overcome. Thus one corps—I was told it came from the West of England—certainly did not number more than sixty or seventy men, but it had a band—and a very good one too—that was very nearly as numerous as the regiment. Now, no doubt but that a large band is an advantage. The great fault of our English military bands is, that they are not half strong enough, whereas in the French army they exceed ours by nearly double the number, and are in consequence all the more martial in their music. But a French band is for one regiment, and every French regiment numbers three battalions, each battalion numbering eight hundred men. For such a corps a body of fifty or sixty musicians is by no means too strong in numbers. But when a rifle volunteer corps that stands on paper less than three hundred men, and when under arms perhaps less than two hundred, has a band of music equal to that of a French regiment, the foolishness of the proceeding must be obvious. The strongest brigade at Portsmouth, on Easter Monday last, numbered two thousand one hundred men, or three hundred men less than a French regiment of the line. But how many bands of music there were in that brigade, who can say? Not I for one. It seemed to me, before the troops unpiled arms and fell in, that every fourth or fifth man your eye came across was a bandsman of some sort or other. And yet, in the seven battalions of English Foot Guards—three of the Grenadiers, two of the Coldstreams, and two of the Scots Fusiliers—there are but three bands; that is one band for each regiment, and the said band always remains at head-quarters, each battalion having its own corps of drums and fifes, just as in the French army.

Would it not—this was a reflection of mine more than once during the day of the great review—would it not be a good thing if our volunteers were formed into larger bodies—say into regiments of at least a thousand or twelve hundred strong—and had fewer military bands and less variety of uniforms? The number of the latter is perfectly astounding, and is, at a great assembly like that at Portsmouth as bewildering as the different tongues at Babel must have been. There were in that army of thirty thousand men something like a hundred different uniforms amongst the infantry alone. There were scarlet tunics, and grey, and brown, and green, and slate-coloured, and mud-coloured. There was silver lace, and white-worsted lace, black lace, green cord, red cord, purple, blue, white, and yellow. Some corps had very neat knickerbockers and serviceable leggings; others long trousers over Balmorals; others what the Yankees call "skinned boots," which means boots drawn up over the trousers. Why should this be? Why not let the volunteers settle what uniform they prefer, and let it be adopted throughout the whole force? The British line are all dressed in the same way; the only distinction between the corps being the number on their caps and shoulder straps. The militia corps are also all uniform, being dressed like the line, save that their lace is silver instead of gold. The great mistake of all the fancy work in volunteer uniform was fully shown on Easter Monday. It is impossible to make men dressed differently look well together in the same battalion. And yet, on a review day like that at Portsmouth, adjutants and brigade-majors are obliged to produce a great deal of patch-work in order to equalise the corps, and the consequence was, that volunteers in grey tunics with green lace had, in many cases, to march in the same company as others in brown tunics with red lace. All this is wrong. It does not make the best of what we have at our disposal, and gives the whole body, so to speak, the appearance of

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an army made up of fragments instead of one large whole. Surely the initials and number of the corps might be worn on the shoulder-strap, as is the case in the English line regiments? It is now eight years since the volunteer movement commenced, and we ought to be more advanced than we are in these small matters of details.

But as I stand watching the several corps as the volunteers finish their breakfasts and come together at their various rendezvous, I think to myself how infinitely more soldier-like they are in every respect than the old garde national of France Very many men now barely of middle age must remember those wonderful citizen soldiers that used to mount guard at the Tuileries in the days of Louis Philippe. They were, of a truth, a sight and "a caution." Above the waist they were tolerably uniform in their dress, except that as often as not their pouch-belts were slung over the wrong shoulders. But in trousers and boots they wore what they liked, and wore it how they liked. Some had black cloth evening "pants," with their varnished boots and tight straps. Others wore white trousers cut as wide as a seaman's, with gaiters to match. Many adhered to the blue regulation trousers with red stripes, whilst their companions revelled in the same coloured garment, but plain and without stripes. Now our volunteers have none of these most unsoldier-like ways. With very few exceptions, they are all dressed in a workman-like fashion, and, although the different corps vary too much one from another in their uniforms, every member of each corps is accurately dressed in his proper uniform, and nearly every uniform looks as if meant for use and not for show.

There was certainly not much time lost on Easter Monday before the work of the day began. It was ten o'clock before the last trains had arrived from London, and by eleven the marching past had commenced with one half of the force, whilst the other half—very much to their disgust—were altogether cut out of this show part of the review, and were sent off post haste to Fareham, Havant, and Cosham, there to take up their several positions for the attack in the forthcoming sham fight, the defending corps being detained to march past on Southsea-common. Here, again, the volunteer band nuisance showed in full force. The marching past of some of the regiments was entirely spoilt by the band which had played before the preceding corps being changed just as they came opposite the saluting-point. Thus the step was lost, and the whole corps thrown into confusion just at the most critical moment.

And here, as an old soldier who worked at the business more than a dozen years, I would say a word or two about this part of the day's programme. With even ordinary good arrangement, there ought to have been plenty of time for a march past of the whole volunteer army as well as the sham fight. "Our special correspondents," and other amateur writers upon the volunteer review, seem to take great pains to run down as utterly useless the usual marching past at these reviews. But I would ask how, in the name of common sense, are the general commanding and the other military authorities to see what the troops are like in their appearance unless they march past? And with proper arrangements this part of the review need not last very long. Twenty-five years ago, when the armies under Generals Nott, Pollock, and Sale returned to British India from Affghanistan, I saw a hundred and fifty thousand men march past Lord Ellenborough at Ferozepore in one hour and forty minutes. Surely our thirty thousand volunteers would not have taken so long to defile before General Buller at Southsea last Easter Monday? Say that the march past had commenced an hour earlier, there would have been plenty of time between eleven A.M. and three P.M. for the sham fight.

But the fact is, we are not fair to our volunteers; we expect them to run before they can walk. We give them every Easter Monday far too much of this sham fighting, and look—that is, the authorities look—too little at the improved or decreased steadiness in their parade movements. What inducement have either corps or individuals to pay attention to their drill, and to improve in their general steadiness, when they are not so much as looked at on the only day on which they appear in public? The march past at Portsmouth was a success, and a very great one—of that there can be no doubt. What it suffered from, was too much band and too little knowledge on the part of company officers, the latter being a complaint to which every volunteer corps is very liable. As a general rule, the mounted officers know their work well, being for the most part old line or old Indian officers. But not so the captains and subalterns. And if we really want our volunteers to be what they ought, an examination, or some other positive test of military knowledge, ought to be insisted upon for every person who aspires to a commission in the citizen army. This should be exacted not only before an officer is gazetted to an ensigncy, but also when he obtains every subsequent step.

Some military men believe, or make people think that they believe, that our volunteers would only be of use in the event of an invasion, if placed behind stone walls. I am not one who holds this opinion. I feel quite certain that if we gave them fair play, and only allowed them to be commanded by men who knew their duty well, the volunteer army would fight as well in the field, would be quite as easy to handle, as our regular troops, and would be able by their superior education and intelligence to take even better care of themselves. All soldiers are more or less unsteady when brought first under the fire of an enemy. This has been proved over and over again in every army. But why should our volunteers not do as well in a campaign as did the many hundred thousand Ame-

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ricans who never handled rifles until called upon to fight in the great civil war a few years ago? Even with the comparatively small force now at command, we have a nucleus of regiments and brigades, which could, and no doubt would, be strengthened to almost any amount in case of invasion. But the nucleus must have a different and a better style of officers as captains and subalterns; or at least those now filling these positions should be all obliged to do what many of them no doubt have done—be obliged to learn their duty, and practise it for two or three months with a regular corps before they do so with volunteers.

As a proof of what I say, I would instance a volunteer artillery corps that marched into Portsmouth the day but one before the review. The commander of the battery is an old Indian campaigner, who for many years commanded a troop of horse artillery in the Western Presidency; and I wish I had half as many sovereigns at my bankers as he has seen cannon-shots fired in earnest. Most, if not all, the officers under him are civilians who never served in the regular army. But they have all thoroughly learnt their duty, and the consequence is that the battery would not cut a bad figure even at Woolwich. Let these men but take the field for a campaign, and in three weeks they would be every bit as serviceable as the best regular artillery. And much the same may be said of all the volunteer artillery corps. To unlimber, fire, limber-up, and drive guns—to bring them into position, and to advance or retreat as ordered—every officer, and indeed every gunner and driver, must have a fair knowledge of his work. This the commissioned, non-commissioned, and rank and file feel, and therefore they learn their duty thoroughly. I may be wrong — perhaps I am — but it strikes me forcibly that our volunteer infantry "go in" too much for firing, and neglect other portions of their military training.

But one thing can hardly fail to strike every person as the troops defile past the general commanding, and that is the wonderful number of well-built, sturdy, strong, clean-made men in the ranks of every corps. Here and there we see a volunteer who has run a little to seed, and whose waist is a matter of history. There are, too, a few seedy, weedy-looking individuals, but both these are rare exceptions from the general rule. This strikes me still more forcibly when I follow the corps that have gone off to form the attacking army, and who for four and a half mortal hours are never for one minute off their legs, and seldom standing still. Considering the sedentary lives that most of these men lead, and that the greater number of them never go through a really hard day's work except at this annual review, it is astonishing to see how few of them knock up or are obliged to fall out of the ranks. I am certain that more regular soldiers break down at an ordinary Aldershot review than I saw break down at Portsmouth, and yet I can safely say that I was in every quarter of the field at one or other part of the day's manœuvres.

In the sham fight of Easter Monday last there was a new feature introduced. Soon after the engagement became general, two gun-boats and a number of steam launches came puffing up Porchester Creek, the latter towing a whole flotilla of pinnaces. These took up their position opposite the village of Paul's Grove, which was supposed to have fallen into the hands of the attacking enemy, and upon the latter they opened a fire which was splendid to witness. But previous to this a battery of heavy guns, which were required to defend the Portsmouth lines, had to be taken up the earthworks. These were, of course, too steep for the employment of horses, so the guns were taken in hand by their gunners, helped by a regiment of volunteer infantry, and were all run up into position in almost as little time as it takes to write this description of what volunteers can do in the way of actual work, and this estimate of what they would do in the field if required.

A detailed plan of the sham fight would be interesting to those, and only to those, who know the country about Portsmouth. The first and second divisions—that is the force that did not march past—were supposed to form the enemy, which had advanced from Fareham, had taken the three forts on Portsdown-hill, and had made the lines of defence at Southwick the base of their operations. So much for the attacking enemy. The defenders were the third and fourth divisions, aided by regular artillery and infantry. The defenders had to drive back the enemy from the lines, and to do this, under cover of the fire from the gun-boats, they had to make a sortie over a pontoon-bridge, which was placed over the creek in a very short space of time by the regular engineer corps. Then they had to attack and carry the villages of Cosham and Wymering, and thus force the position of the enemy, turn his flank, and drive him back over the Portsdown-hills. For a time the enemy had decidedly the best of it; the turning-point for the defenders being when the gun-boats opened their fire from the creek. When the enemy began to give way, and the defenders crowded out after them in regiments and brigades—when they seemed really to swarm like ants out of the lines to drive away the attacking force—was the finest sight of the whole day. As I said before, to enable them to cross the creek a pontoon-bridge had to be constructed, and in less than a quarter of an hour from the time when it was commenced, artillery guns passed over it. Nothing could be better conceived than the whole plan to give our volunteers an idea of what real warfare is, particularly the kind of warfare which, if ever their services are required, they will be very sure to witness.

By a few minutes after five o'clock the business of the day was over: the last shot was fired, and regiments began to move towards the railway station on their way back to

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London. But before going with them to the trains, I must remark upon what seemed to me the most wonderful part of the whole proceedings. This was the comparative freshness, and the unvarying good temper of every volunteer —at least, of every one that I came across. There was hardly a man present who had not been up and dressed shortly after three A.M., and some even previous to that hour. They had walked through dark streets to join their respective corps, and had marched through London to the different railway stations with the cold north wind. Many had to wait on the platforms for an hour or more until their turn to depart came. Then three hours or so of railway, and since that seven hours continually on the tramp. They were white with dust as to their hair and clothes, and black as to their faces and hands with the cartridges they had been handling all day. And yet with all this—to say nothing of the want of regular meals, which no Englishmen, as a rule, can approve of—I did not hear a single attempt at grumbling, nor anything but the most good-tempered remarks and jokes on all sides. Throughout the long day only four men applied to the medical officers—two had suffered from slight accidents, and two from illness. If there is not the making of a fine army in men like these, where are we to look for efficient soldiers? I have seen three times that number of soldiers fall out from an ordinary battalion drill in an English garrison; and it should be remembered that on Easter Monday there were, besides the regular troops present, twenty-seven thousand, and more, volunteers.

I confess that I came back from Portsmouth with altered feelings about the volunteer force. All professions, and all professional men, have their prejudices. Mine, as a military man, were that the volunteer movement was very pretty soldiering in play; but beyond this I would not allow that it could be of any use, save, perhaps, to keep young men out of mischief by inducing them to go to drill and perfect themselves in shooting. But I now believe that the defence of the country could be entrusted to this force, and that if we only made the most of the men, and officered them a little better, we might, in a very great measure, do away with our standing army. As a French gentleman, who was present at the review, remarked to me, "the very name of this citizen army shows what a wonderful force it is. To think that nearly thirty thousand men would, of their own free will, go through a day's fatigue like this without the slightest personal advantage to be gained, and that peers, wealthy commoners, members of parliament, professional men, merchants, shopkeepers, artisans, and even labouring men join heart and hand in a voluntary movement of this kind, shows more than volumes could do the great strength of this nation. It is only in Britain, in the British colonies, or in the United States of America that such a sight could be possible. Nowhere else would even the meaning of the word volunteer be fully understood." And I must say that I quite agree with the moral which my French friend drew from the Easter Monday display at Portsmouth.

SISTER ANNE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

It is well for me that when I settled down here a lonely old maid I gave up the world, and such praise or blame as attaches to actions of which the motives lie hidden and buried far beyond its ken. It is well for me, but it is a good that has its drawbacks, and my heart ached last night when Mrs. Bugden left me.

I sat by the open window looking out on the grey coast that wound away through the blue evening mists, and at the dark sea breaking on the shingle with a broad white edge of foam. I watched the stars coming out in the sky with a timid glittering light, and as the breeze passed over my little garden and brought me the fragrance of the flowers which are now my great delight, I thought: "Have I deserved this? Have I deserved, because, for reasons which my judge in Heaven alone must know, I have severed myself from the society that was most dear to my heart, have I deserved to be thought heartless?" Quick and sure came an avenging "No!" But who heard, who will ever hear it? Not poor Mrs. Bugden, nor that world of which she so zealously made herself the echo. Then it is well for me, as I said, that I gave up the world and its praise and blame when I chose this for my last resting place.

I must not complain; my home though lonely is very pleasant. My cottage is small, but then I have few visitors and no friends to come and share it, so there is no need for more room. If the furniture is plain, dark and brown, it is such as I like. And then I have books, and goodly company for winter. Noble poets, wise philosophers, and pleasant garrulous novelists, dealers in wonderful or simple tales, who can still lure me from myself and charm my old heart—old I call it, though my hair is black as when I was twenty; but it is not always by years that one must reckon a lonely woman's age. When I am tired of reading I turn to music; there, too, I deal with wonderful minds, souls great and tender, whose converse is very sweet. And then have I not my garden, my flowers, my exotics, and my ferns? For the climate is so mild that almost all the year round I can take pleasure in surveying or adorning the little world that calls me queen.

I came back here three years ago, and I have not forgotten how sad and lonely I felt when I entered this place. Here, then, I was to live and die. This little cottage, not half so large as the tombs the old Romans reared on the Appian way, was to be my last abode upon earth. The choice was mine and could be rescinded, but I knew it would not be—I knew it was final;

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twice I had been wrecked, and I would not make a third venture. And yet I will not repine; if twice the wreck was bitter, twice too the voyage was sweet and fair; if twice I went through a great agony, it came after long happiness.

I was a very happy child. My father was wealthy, and we lived in an old Elizabethan mansion with a background of noble trees and a bright Dutch flower garden in front. My mother died before I could feel her loss; my godmother, Aunt Anne, replaced her for a time, and when she married and left us, my father found Miss Græme. I was sitting in the garden reading a fairy tale by the little trickling fountain, when I saw her first. I had been looking at the old red house, with its flight of steps and the terrace, and the vases of scarlet geraniums, until I had turned all these into the good fairy's palace. My book was on my lap, and as I listened to the plash, plash of the water which danced in the sunlight, and fell back bubbling over its broad stone cup into the basin below, I entered fairy land with the lovely little princess, whom the handsome prince was ever seeking and never finding, though even to my childish mind, it would have been so easy.

"Anne," said my father's voice. I looked up with a start, and there in the sunlight I saw Miss Græme. Was it the fairy tale I had been reading, was it something in her own young and gracious aspect that made her so lovely in my childish eyes? I have been assured since then that Mary Græme was by no means beautiful, though every one agreed that her dark eyes were very fine, and that her smile was irresistible. That smile shone on me when glancing up. I saw a young and slender girl in deep mourning, and who looked almost a child—the lovely little princess—as she stood by my stalwart father's side.

This was my governess. I soon loved her with a sort of passion. Miss Græme found in me a willing and docile pupil, and she did not merely teach me as she was bound to do, she also imparted to me some of her own tastes, and with them much endearing happiness. To her I owe not only my knowledge of, but also my love for music and flowers. How often, as I sit alone and play some grand passage from Beethoven, some tender and lovely air from Mozart, does Miss Græme's young face, lit by those soft dark eyes of hers, rise by my side, and smile on me once more—sweet, loving, and, oh! have I not proved it, and may I not say it, beloved? But even more than music do my walks in the country recal her. Many a time have we wandered together, she a happy girl, and I a happy child, in the green lanes where we watched the birth of the early flowers, the primrose, the violet, the lily of the valley, and others more humble still. Many a time have we gone forth to steal ferns from their shady haunts, glossy hart's tongue, delicate maidenhair, stately polipodies, wherewith to adorn our fernery! I am lonely now, but I will not deny you, my happy days, because you were followed by some sad and dark hours! You did not pass away from my life, like sunlight from the landscape in summer time. When I look back I see you still in the past, bright, warm, and beautiful, in ever-abiding light. I do not know why my Aunt Anne did not like Miss Græme. Whenever she came to see us she had something unpleasant to say about that young lady herself, or about her mode of teaching me. Either I did not improve enough, or when that line of attack could not be taken, Miss Græme was not what she should be, or sometimes, by a subtle difference, was what she should not be. "I must say she is a little bit of a princess," once said Aunt Anne within my hearing.

My father raised his eyebrows, and burst out into one of his joyous genial laughs.

"I have seen some princesses in my time," he said gaily, "and my experience of the royal ladies is that there are not many of them half so charming as Miss Græme."

Now I was quite of my father's opinion; from the beginning I had identified my dear Miss Græme with the princess whose story I was reading when I first saw her, and as the love of children is not a silent discreet love, I took the very earliest opportunity I got of repeating to my young governess both Aunt Anne's speech and my father's answer.

"Aunt Anne says you are a little bit of a princess," said I, "and papa says he wishes princesses were half so charming as you are," I added triumphantly.

Poor Miss Græme turned crimson as she heard me, and no wonder—my father was in the room. His presence, which had seemed no objection to me, gave rather too much force to the compliment I conveyed.

"You little tell tale," said my father, pulling my ear, but all the time he was looking at Miss Græme, who blushed more and more.

Two months after this he married her. I wonder who was happiest on this wedding day! I have often thought it was I. It seemed such a grand thing that my dear princess should have found her prince in my tall handsome father; that she should no longer be Miss Græme, but Lady William Sydney! Besides I was eight years old, and was to be bridesmaid, the only one Miss Græme would have, though in other respects the marriage ceremony was performed with great pomp, great ringing of bells, great strewing of flowers, and, as if Heaven itself had blessed it, with a great and glorious flood of the summer sunshine pouring down upon it. My father looked supremely blest. He was fifteen years older than his little bride, who seemed more childish than ever by his side; but I think the disparity in their years only endeared them the more to each other; as he loved her youth, so she loved his strength. The world, I believe, spoke of folly on one side and of designing art on the other; but I, who loved them both, thought there never had been such a pair out of my old friend, the Fairy Tales.

I was old enough to know better, but when

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I saw them entering the carriage which was to take them away, and realised for the first time that I was to remain behind alone with Aunt Anne, my grief resembled frenzy. They could not drive off and leave me in that state, yet every attempt at consolation only made me worse. It was unreasonable, vexatious, and absurd; but the very folly of children makes them strong. I saw my father and his wife exchange perplexed and distressed looks; then I heard her whisper timidly, with her hand on his arm, and her dark eyes raised to his, "Shall we take her, William?"

He could not resist that pleading look to which paternal weakness in his own heart responded; they did not exactly take me, indeed, but I followed them in another carriage with my maid. We joined them at the station, and I accompanied them to the little seaside town up the coast, where they spent their honeymoon. On a beach like this I played and wandered with my dear young stepmother, and heard my genial father's happy voice calling us his two little girls. Very often when I go out alone of an evening and wander on the shore, I see myself a child again, with my hand in her kind hand. The tide which murmurs up to my feet is the tide of those bygone years; the faces which come out of the darkness of the past are those two dear faces, and I am happy, oh! very happy, and I pity those, from my heart I pity those, to whom such remembrances only bring sorrow.

Lady William Sydney's honours did not deprive me of my governess. She continued to teach me until my brother William was born, and though other cares then partly took her from me, she still superintended my education. The birth of that child was a great event in our circle. My father was never weary of looking at and admiring him, and I loved him more than I can say. He was like his mother, and I believe I loved him for her sake as well as for his own. He had her smile and her eyes, and though he was sadly indulged, he had her sweetness and rare charm. Every one loved that boy, so what wonder that I, his sister, and his elder by ten years, should love him with something of a mother's passion in my childish heart! He was my treasure and my darling, and I firmly believed this world held not another child so beautiful and so good as my little brother.

I was fifteen and William was five years old when my dear young stepmother one evening complained of a sore throat. She complained still more the next morning. The doctor was sent for, and his first act was to order the children out of the house. Spite of my protests and my tears, we were at once removed to the abode of my stepmother's cousin, a widowed Mrs. Gibson, who lived with her two children at the other end of the village.

Mrs. Gibson was a new comer amongst us. She owned two little cottages by the sea, in one of which she resided. She was a lady, but she was poor and I knew it; I did not know, however, that she lived in a house so small and so dreary as that to which Martha Vincent, my maid, now took William and me. The ruinous aspect of the place without, the low mean rooms within, depressed me, and when I went up to the apartment assigned to us, and looked down on the poor bare garden below, I felt strangely disconsolate.

"That's Rosebower," glibly said little Ellen Gibson, who had followed me in.

"Ma wants a tenant, but she can't get one."

A sky black as ink and which spoke of coming rain, lowered above a dilapidated cottage. A weather-stained board with the words TO LET upon it stared at me over the garden hedge; but, young as I was, I wondered Mrs. Gibson expected a tenant for this desolate dwelling. The garden had gone wild and was full of weeds. Clematis had so overrun the porch that the door was half hidden with it. The roof looked mossy and insecure, and the window panes were shattered or broken. I thought of my father's Elizabethan mansion, so warm and red in the sunshine, of the old ancestral elms which grew around it, of the sunny garden and the fountain, and, above all, I thought of my dear stepmother, from whose presence I had been so ruthlessly banished, and hiding my face in my hands, I began to cry.

"What are you crying for?" asked Ellen Gibson crossly. "William," she called out, "do come and look at her—she's crying."

"Hush!" said I, showing her the bed on which my little brother already lay sleeping, with his rosy face turned to us; "do not waken him."

"I don't mean him," tartly replied Ellen, shaking her golden curls, "I mean *my* brother William," she added, nodding towards the garden where a young man was busy digging.

I peeped down at him, then drew back a little sullenly, I fear; it seemed as if there should be no William save mine, and I suppose Ellen, though by some years my junior, had the same feeling, for she said, with a little scornful toss of her pretty head,

"Is that stupid little boy called William?"

I felt my cheeks burn with indignation.

"He is not stupid," I replied, hotly; "he is very clever."

"He is stupid," persisted Ellen; "William says so."

If my William was perfect, her William was infallible, and his sentence was without appeal.

"William is not stupid," I said again, and I added, with stinging emphasis, "and he is not awkward, not at all—he knows how to sit on a chair, and how to avoid treading on people's clothes."

The words were repented as soon as uttered, for though William Gibson was awkward, and though he fidgetted on his chair so as to make me unhappy, though he had trod on and torn my stepmother's dress when he came to our house with his mother and sister, I had no wish to make impertinent comments. But, to my

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great relief, Ellen stared up at me and did not answer; she had not understood.

"He is going to sleep at Rosebower to night," she said; "mamma told Jane to make up a bed for him."

Alas! what did I care for that information. The passing curiosity with which I had looked at the dreary untenanted cottage was over, and I was again desolate and heart stricken. I could not sleep that night; I had no rest, no peace, the next day, and when evening came round I left my William playing with Ellen in the garden, and stole out unperceived. A lane at the back of the village led to my father's house. It was lonely, and along that lane I swiftly stole in the grey glooming; I was doing a wrong thing and I knew it, but the longing wish to see my stepmother again was stronger than conscience or duty. I reached the house unperceived, and so bided my opportunity that I crept up the staircase and entered her room unheard. My father was with the doctor below, the nurse, exhausted by her vigil, was sleeping in her chair at the foot of the bed. A night lamp burned on the table and lit the room very dimly. I remember how the tall mirror spread like a sheet of pale gleaming light before me, how the white curtains looked grey and dim as they fell around the bed where my mother had died thirteen years before this, and where my second mother, so tender and so dear, was soon to breathe her last. But I did not fear that then. I could not imagine anything like it. I came not for a last parting on this side of the grave; but because absence seemed intolerable and love had drawn me. My great fear was that I should startle her; also that I should hear reproof from those kind lips that were ever so reluctant to censure my childish misdoings. So my first words were:

"Dear mamma, pray don't scold me." She started, she motioned me away with her poor trembling hand.

"Go, go," she said in a voice so altered that I scarcely knew it: "don't come near me."

I thought her angry, and did not dare to approach, but neither could I bear to go at once.

"Oh, go, my darling," she entreated, "go;" then, with sudden fear she added, looking round, "Where is William?"

I replied that I had left the child at Mrs. Gibson's. This seemed to relieve her. She looked at me, and altered though she was, I knew the tender look of her eyes again.

"I was true to you," she said, "be true to the boy, be true to him after I am gone, and now go—go if you love me, Anne."

I obeyed her, but as I stood on the threshold of the door, I stopped to look at her and say softly,

"I will be true to William, I will be true." I said it meaning it, and yet not knowing how deep lay the meaning of my own words, nor how far into future years my promise extended. My stepmother smiled very sweetly as she heard me, and I went away rejoicing that I had seen her, bearing that smile with me along the lonely lane, till I came back to Mrs. Gibson's cottage, and found William, who had not missed me, still playing with Ellen. I took him in my arms and kissed him.

"I will be true to you, my pet," I said, "won't I, that's all!" I said it, I meant it; but little did I know that my eyes had seen their last of William's mother. It was William Gibson who told me of my stepmother's death. In what words he put the news, or how I bore them, I do not remember. I only remember that as he looked down into my face and held my hands in his, there was a great pity in his deep grey eyes. William Gibson had a grave kind face for one so young. I saw that even then; but just as I saw the little garden in which I stood, and the red sunlight flashing back from the broken windows of Rosebower, whilst a stormy sky brooded over its low roof. What passed on that first dreary day I scarcely know now; all is swallowed up in the sense of a great desolation, but the next morning I remembered all.

I felt unutterably wretched. I wished to see no one, to speak to no one. I stole away from Mrs. Gibson who wanted to comfort me, from Ellen who teased me, from my poor little William who was playing and laughing though his mother lay pale and dead in her room, and not knowing where to hide, I crept round to Rosebower. The little garden-gate stood open. I passed in and stole up to the cottage; the door was open too, and pushing back the drooping clematis, I entered a low dark parlour. Beyond the window I saw and heard the sounding sea rolling up the beach with great heavy waves. It was moaning and lamenting, and its sad voice went to my very heart. I sank down on my knees, and leaning my head on the window-sill, I cried bitterly.

"Hush! hush!" said William Gibson's grave tones behind me, "pray don't."

"I must, oh I must!" I replied, looking round at him through my tears, "I must cry because she is dead."

William Gibson, so shy, so nervous and awkward in every-day life, ceased to be so when anything moved him. He now gave me a clear resolute look; he took my hand and made me rise; he led me out of that dull dark room into the open air, and walking with me by the shore, with my hand still in his, he admonished me gently. He was my elder by some years. He was my superior in a hundred ways. He was good and he was strong, and goodness and strength have a rare power. He did not charm my grief away, for who could have done that, child though I was still, but he soothed the fever of the wound it was past his skill to cure. Ah, how gently, how tenderly, and how wisely, too, for a man so young, he dealt with me on that sad morning, and how my whole heart yearned towards him. I longed to tell him what I had said to his sister, and to ask him to forgive me.

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"I am very sorry," I began, then I stopped short.

"For what?" he asked, kindly.

I felt myself turning crimson, and William Gibson, who was delicate as well as kind, put no further questions. And, alas! my penitent confession was not spoken. Many years later he asked me what it was that I had meant to say then, and when I told him, he shook his head and sighed.

CHAPTER II.

The death of my dear stepmother was the first great calamity of my life, the first at least of which I was conscious. It did not merely pierce my very heart with grief, it was also the leading cause of almost every subsequent affliction which befel me. My father never recovered the blow. He had been a happy and prosperous man till then, but after his wife's death he became both sad and unfortunate. The judgment and industry which had won him wealth and his knighthood failed him in this great grief. He had heavy losses, speculated to redeem, became the prey of designing men, and died broken-hearted and ruined before I was twenty. My brother William was left wholly unprovided for; but from my mother I derived a small income on which we could live, and, thanks to my trustee and to William's guardian and mine, Mr. Rolt, we were not divided. We had to leave our old home, however, and oh! how my heart ached as, standing on the threshold of my dead stepmother's room, I looked back on everything which recalled her so vividly. Five years had not effaced her from my heart, or made her memory less dear; and when, leading William by the hand, I passed by the little fountain with its waters dancing in the sun, I seemed to see her dear face looking tenderly at her child and me through the shining spray.

Mr. Rolt was married, and with his wife and him we went to live, at Brompton. They were very good-natured people, and both belonged to what I will venture to call the sleeping tribe. Few things roused them; yet I should have been happy enough with them if my darling's prospects had not given me many an anxious thought.

Whenever I spoke to Mr. Rolt of my late father's affairs, he raised his hands and turned up his eyes to signify the deplorable state in which they had been left. Whenever I attempted to get hold of something like clear and definite information, he put me away with a "Oh, you girl! you girl!" that was both sweeping and contemptuous.

But when I was twenty-one matters changed. I then insisted on knowing how and why my father's property had melted away; I insisted on talking to the lawyer myself, and that gentleman was heard to declare that "Miss Sydney was an extraordinary young lady. Such a head for business in a girl of her years was simply fabulous." Good old gentleman, I don't think my head was fabulous at all, nor were my abilities so very wonderful. If my interest alone had been at stake I dare say I should have let matters take their course, nor troubled my brain with the recovery of seemingly lost thousands. But you see there was William! William, my darling boy; William, my father's child, who looked at me with his mother's eyes and smiled that smile I had seen on her poor dear face the night before she died. I had promised her that I would be true to him, and feeling as I did, that if I did not care for him, no one would, I set my mind, my heart, my whole energies to the task of saving something for him out of our great wreck. Alas! I saved very little, not enough to give him the education of a gentleman. I had two hundred a-year of my own; I resolved to spare out of that whatever he might need, in order to live cheaply and yet not be alone in a stange place. William was to go to a German university. I wrote to Mrs. Gibson and asked her for that dreary Rosebower, which, as I knew, the poor lady still found it very hard to let. Both Mr. Rolt and the lawyer approved the course I was taking. I could not do better for the boy, they said.

"But you will find it lonely," remarked Mr. Rolt, "very lonely."

"I shall not mind, Mr. Rolt; besides, who knows but we may yet recover the forty thousand pounds that West Indian Monsieur Thomas owed my poor father?"

"Oh, you girl!" ejaculated Mr. Rolt.

"My dear young lady," coolly remarked the lawyer, "you will get the forty thousand pounds when Monsieur Thomas turns up—and he never will turn up in this world. I have told you again and again that according to my information the man is dead."

"My dear sir, the man cheated my poor father out of his money, but having heard of my wonderful talents for business, and being afraid of them, he pretends to be dead. Insects do it constantly, why should not a thief do it too?"

They laughed, and that was all the comfort I got from them. It was very hard to part from my dear boy, who was now eleven years old, but I went through it bravely, I believe. I know that women seldom make men, and I loved him far too much to wish to keep him near me, and ruin, maybe, the whole of his future life, so we parted. I gave him up to the friend who was to see him safe to Germany, and I went alone to Rosebower.

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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.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

SECOND NARRATIVE.

Contributed by Mathew Bruff, Solicitor, of Gray's Inn Square.

CHAPTER I.

MY fair friend, Miss Clack, having laid down the pen, there are two reasons for my taking it up next, in my turn.

In the first place, I am in a position to throw the necessary light on certain points of interest which have thus far been left in the dark. Miss Verinder had her own private reason for breaking her marriage engagement—and I was at the bottom of it. Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite had his own private reason for withdrawing all claim to the hand of his charming cousin—and I discovered what it was.

In the second place, it was my good or ill fortune, I hardly know which, to find myself personally involved—at the period of which I am now writing—in the mystery of the Indian Diamond. I had the honour of an interview, at my own office, with an Oriental stranger of distinguished manners, who was no other, unquestionably, than the chief of the three Indians. Add to this, that I met with the celebrated traveller, Mr. Murthwaite, the day afterwards, and that I held a conversation with him on the subject of the Moonstone, which has a very important bearing on later events. And there you have the statement of my claims to fill the position which I occupy in these pages.

The true story of the broken marriage engagement comes first in point of time, and must therefore take the first place in the present narrative. Tracing my way back along the chain of events, from one end to the other, I find it necessary to open the scene, oddly enough as you will think, at the bedside of my excellent client and friend, the late Sir John Verinder.

Sir John had his share—perhaps rather a large share—of the more harmless and amiable of the weaknesses incidental to humanity. Among these, I may mention as applicable to the matter in hand, an invincible reluctance—so long as he enjoyed his usual good health—to face the responsibility of making his will. Lady Verinder exerted her influence to rouse him to a sense of duty in this matter; and I exerted my influence. He admitted the justice of our views—but he went no further than that, until he found himself afflicted with the illness which ultimately brought him to his grave. Then, I was sent for at last, to take my client's instructions on the subject of his will. They proved to be the simplest instructions I had ever received in the whole of my professional career.

Sir John was dozing, when I entered the room. He roused himself at the sight of me.

"How do you do, Mr. Bruff?" he said. "I shan't be very long about this. And then I'll go to sleep again." He looked on with great interest while I collected pens, ink, and paper. "Are you ready?" he asked. I bowed, and took a dip of ink, and waited for my instructions.

"I leave everything to my wife," said Sir John. "That's all." He turned round on his pillow, and composed himself to sleep again.

I was obliged to disturb him.

"Am I to understand," I asked, "that you leave the whole of the property, of every sort and description, of which you die possessed, absolutely to Lady Verinder?"

"Yes," said Sir John. "Only *I* put it shorter. Why can't *you* put it shorter, and let me go to sleep again? Everything to my wife. That's my Will."

His property was entirely at his own disposal, and was of two kinds. Property in land (I purposely abstain from using technical language), and property in money. In the majority of cases, I am afraid I should have felt it my duty to my client to ask him to reconsider his Will. In the case of Sir John, I knew Lady Verinder to be, not only worthy of the unreserved trust which her husband had placed in her (all good wives are worthy of that)—but to be also capable of properly administering a trust (which, in my experience of the fair sex, not one in a thousand of them is competent to do). In ten minutes, Sir John's Will was drawn, and executed, and Sir John himself, good man, was finishing his interrupted nap.

Lady Verinder amply justified the confidence which her husband had placed in her. In the first days of her widowhood, she sent for me,

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and made her Will. The view she took of her position was so thoroughly sound and sensible, that I was relieved of all necessity for advising her. My responsibility began and ended with shaping her instructions into the proper legal form. Before Sir John had been a fortnight in his grave, the future of his daughter had been most wisely and most affectionately provided for.

The Will remained in its fireproof box at my office, through more years than I like to reckon up. It was not till the summer of eighteen hundred and forty-eight that I found occasion to look at it again under very melancholy circumstances.

At the date I have mentioned, the doctors pronounced the sentence on poor Lady Verinder, which was literally a sentence of death. I was the first person whom she informed of her situation; and I found her anxious to go over her Will again with me.

It was impossible to improve the provisions relating to her daughter. But, in the lapse of time, her wishes in regard to certain minor legacies, left to different relatives, had undergone some modification; and it became necessary to add three or four Codicils to the original document. Having done this at once, for fear of accidents, I obtained her ladyship's permission to embody her recent instructions in a second Will. My object was to avoid certain inevitable confusions and repetitions which now disfigured the original document, and which, to own the truth, grated sadly on my professional sense of the fitness of things.

The execution of this second Will has been described by Miss Clack, who was so obliging as to witness it. So far as regarded Rachel Verinder's pecuniary interests, it was, word for word, the exact counterpart of the first Will. The only changes introduced related to the appointment of a guardian, and to certain provisions concerning that appointment, which were made under my advice. On Lady Verinder's death, the Will was placed in the hands of my proctor to be "proved" (as the phrase is) in the usual way.

In about three weeks from that time—as well as I can remember—the first warning reached me of something unusual going on under the surface. I happened to be looking in at my friend the proctor's office, and I observed that he received me with an appearance of greater interest than usual.

"I have some news for you," he said. "What do you think I heard at Doctors'-commons this morning? Lady Verinder's Will has been asked for, and examined, already!"

This was news indeed! There was absolutely nothing which could be contested in the Will; and there was nobody I could think of who had the slightest interest in examining it. (I shall perhaps do well if I explain in this place, for the benefit of the few people who don't know it already, that the law allows all Wills to be examined at Doctors'-commons by anybody who applies, on the payment of a shilling fee.)

"Did you hear who asked for the Will?" I inquired.

"Yes; the clerk had no hesitation in telling me. Mr. Smalley, of the firm of Skipp and Smalley, asked for it. The Will has not been copied yet into the great Folio Registers. So there was no alternative but to depart from the usual course, and to let him see the original document. He looked it over carefully, and made a note in his pocket-book. Have you any idea of what he wanted with it?"

I shook my head. "I shall find out," I answered, "before I am a day older." With that, I went back at once to my own office.

If any other firm of solicitors had been concerned in this unaccountable examination of my deceased client's Will, I might have found some difficulty in making the necessary discovery. But I had a hold over Skipp and Smalley which made my course in this matter a comparatively easy one. My common law clerk (a most competent and excellent man) was a brother of Mr. Smalley's; and, owing to this sort of indirect connexion with me, Skipp and Smalley had, for some years past, picked up the crumbs that fell from my table, in the shape of cases brought to my office, which, for various reasons, I did not think it worth while to undertake. My professional patronage was, in this way, of some importance to the firm. I intended, if necessary, to remind them of that patronage, on the present occasion.

The moment I got back, I spoke to my clerk; and, after telling him what had happened, I sent him to his brother's office, "with Mr. Bruff's compliments, and he would be glad to know why Messrs. Skipp and Smalley had found it necessary to examine Lady Verinder's Will."

This message brought Mr. Smalley back to my office, in company with his brother. He acknowledged that he had acted under instructions received from a client. And then he put it to me, whether it would not be a breach of professional confidence on his part to say more.

We had a smart discussion upon that. He was right, no doubt; and I was wrong. The truth is, I was angry and suspicious—and I insisted on knowing more. Worse still, I declined to consider any additional information offered to me, as a secret placed in my keeping: I claimed perfect freedom to use my own discretion. Worse even than that, I took an unwarrantable advantage of my position. "Choose, sir," I said to Mr. Smalley, "between the risk of losing your client's business, and the risk of losing Mine." Quite indefensible, I admit—an act of tyranny, and nothing less. Like other tyrants, I carried my point. Mr. Smalley chose his alternative, without a moment's hesitation. He smiled resignedly, and gave up the name of his client:

Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite.

That was enough for me—I wanted to know no more.

Having reached this point in my narrative, it

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now becomes necessary to place the reader of these lines—so far as Lady Verinder's Will is concerned—on a footing of perfect equality, in respect of information, with myself.

Let me state, then, in the fewest possible words, that Rachel Verinder had nothing but a life-interest in the property. Her mother's excellent sense, and my long experience, had combined to relieve her of all responsibility, and to guard her from all danger of becoming the victim in the future of some needy and unscrupulous man. Neither she, nor her husband (if she married), could raise sixpence, either on the property in land, or on the property in money. They would have the houses in London and in Yorkshire to live in, and they would have the handsome income—and that was all.

When I came to think over what I had discovered, I was sorely perplexed what to do next.

Hardly a week had passed since I had heard (to my surprise and distress) of Miss Verinder's proposed marriage. I had the sincerest admiration and affection for her; and I had been inexpressibly grieved when I heard that she was about to throw herself away on Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. And now, here was this man—whom I had always believed to be a smooth-tongued impostor—justifying the very worst that I had thought of him, and plainly revealing the mercenary object of the marriage, on his side! And what of that?—you may reply—the thing is done every day. Granted, my dear sir. But would you think of it quite as lightly as you do, if the thing was done (let us say) with your own sister?

The first consideration which now naturally occurred to me, was this. Would Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite hold to his engagement, after what his lawyer had discovered for him?

It depended entirely on his pecuniary position, of which I knew nothing. If that position was not a desperate one, it would be well worth his while to marry Miss Verinder for her income alone. If, on the other hand, he stood in urgent need of realising a large sum by a given time, then Lady Verinder's Will would exactly meet the case, and would preserve her daughter from falling into a scoundrel's hands.

In the latter event, there would be no need for me to distress Miss Rachel, in the first days of her mourning for her mother, by an immediate revelation of the truth. In the former event, if I remained silent, I should be conniving at a marriage which would make her miserable for life.

My doubts ended in my calling at the hotel in London, at which I knew Mrs. Ablewhite and Miss Verinder to be staying. They informed me that they were going to Brighton the next day, and that an unexpected obstacle prevented Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite from accompanying them. I at once proposed to take his place. When I was only thinking of Rachel Verinder, it was possible to hesitate. When I actually saw her, my mind was made up directly, come what might of it, to tell her the truth.

I found my opportunity, when I was out walking with her, on the day after my arrival.

"May I speak to you," I asked, "about your marriage engagement?"

"Yes," she said, indifferently, "if you have nothing more interesting to talk about."

"Will you forgive an old friend and servant of your family, Miss Rachel, if I venture on asking whether your heart is set on this marriage?"

"I am marrying in despair, Mr. Bruff—on the chance of dropping into some sort of stagnant happiness which may reconcile me to my life."

Strong language! and suggestive of something below the surface, in the shape of a romance. But I had my own object in view, and I declined (as we lawyers say) to pursue the question into its side issues.

"Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite can hardly be of your way of thinking," I said. "*His* heart must be set on the marriage, at any rate?"

"He says so, and I suppose I ought to believe him. He would hardly marry me, after what I have owned to him, unless he was fond of me."

Poor thing! the bare idea of a man marrying her for his own selfish and mercenary ends had never entered her head. The task I had set myself began to look like a harder task than I had bargained for.

"It sounds strangely," I went on, "in my old-fashioned ears——"

"What sounds strangely?" she asked.

"To hear you speak of your future husband as if you were not quite sure of the sincerity of his attachment. Are you conscious of any reason in your own mind for doubting him?"

Her astonishing quickness of perception, detected a change in my voice, or my manner, when I put that question, which warned her that I had been speaking all along with some ulterior object in view. She stopped, and, taking her arm out of mine, looked me searchingly in the face.

"Mr. Bruff," she said, "you have something to tell me about Godfrey Ablewhite. Tell it."

I knew her well enough to take her at her word. I told it.

She put her arm again into mine, and walked on with me slowly. I felt her hand tightening its grasp mechanically on my arm, and I saw her getting paler and paler as I went on—but, not a word passed her lips while I was speaking. When I had done, she still kept silence. Her head drooped a little, and she walked by my side, unconscious of my presence, unconscious of everything about her; lost—buried, I might almost say—in her own thoughts.

I made no attempt to disturb her. My experience of her disposition warned me, on this, as on former occasions, to give her time.

The first instinct of girls in general, on being told of anything which interests them, is to ask a multitude of questions, and then to run

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off, and talk it all over with some favourite friend. Rachel Verinder's first instinct, under similar circumstances, was to shut herself up in her own mind, and to think it over by herself. This absolute self-dependence is a great virtue in a man. In a woman, it has the serious drawback of morally separating her from the mass of her sex, and so exposing her to misconstruction by the general opinion. I strongly suspect myself of thinking as the rest of the world think in this matter—except in the case of Rachel Verinder. The self-dependence in *her* character, was one of its virtues in my estimation; partly, no doubt, because I sincerely admired and liked her; partly, because the view I took of her connexion with the loss of the Moonstone was based on my own special knowledge of her disposition. Badly as appearances might look, in the matter of the Diamond—shocking as it undoubtedly was to know that she was associated in any way with the mystery of an undiscovered theft—I was satisfied nevertheless that she had done nothing unworthy of her, because I was also satisfied that she had not stirred a step in the business, without shutting herself up in her own mind, and thinking it over first.

We had walked on, for nearly a mile I should say, before Rachel roused herself. She suddenly looked up at me with a faint reflection of her smile of happier times—the most irresistible smile I have ever seen on a woman's face.

"I owe much already to your kindness," she said. "And I feel more deeply indebted to it now than ever. If you hear any rumours of my marriage when you go back to London, contradict them at once, on my authority."

"Have you resolved to break your engagement?" I asked.

"Can you doubt it?" she returned proudly, "after what you have told me!"

"My dear Miss Rachel, you are very young—and you may find more difficulty in withdrawing from your present position than you anticipate. Have you no one—I mean a lady of course—whom you could consult?"

"No one," she answered.

It distressed me, it did indeed distress me, to hear her say that. She was so young and so lonely—and she bore it so well! The impulse to help her got the better of any sense of my own unfitness which I might have felt under the circumstances; and I stated such ideas on the subject as occurred to me on the spur of the moment, to the best of my ability. I have advised a prodigious number of clients, and have dealt with some exceedingly awkward difficulties, in my time. But this was the first occasion on which I had ever found myself advising a young lady how to obtain her release from a marriage engagement. The suggestion I offered amounted briefly to this. I recommended her to tell Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite—at a private interview, of course—that he had, to her certain knowledge, betrayed the mercenary nature of the motive on his side. She was then to add that their marriage, after what she had discovered, was a simple impossibility—and she was to put it to him, whether he thought it wisest to secure her silence by falling in with her views, or to force her, by opposing them, to make the motive under which she was acting generally known. If he attempted to defend himself, or to deny the facts, she was, in that event, to refer him to *me*.

Miss Verinder listened attentively till I had done. She then thanked me very prettily for my advice, but informed me at the same time that it was impossible for her to follow it.

"May I ask," I said, "what objection you see to following it?"

She hesitated—and then met me with a question on her side.

"Suppose you were asked to express your opinion of Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's conduct?" she began.

"Yes?"

"What would you call it?"

"I should call it the conduct of a meanly deceitful man."

"Mr. Bruff! I have believed in that man. I have promised to marry that man. How can I tell him he is mean, how can I tell him he has deceived me, how can I disgrace him in the eyes of the world, after that? I have degraded myself by ever thinking of him as my husband. If I say what you tell me to say to him—I am owning that I have degraded myself to his face. I can't do that—after what has passed between us—I can't do that! The shame of it would be nothing to *him*! But the shame of it would be unendurable to *me*."

Here was another of the marked peculiarities in her character disclosing itself to me without reserve. Here was her sensitive horror of the bare contact with anything mean, blinding her to every consideration of what she owed to herself, hurrying her into a false position which might compromise her in the estimation of all her friends! Up to this time, I had been a little diffident about the propriety of the advice I had given to her. But, after what she had just said, I had no sort of doubt that it was the best advice that could have been offered; and I felt no sort of hesitation in pressing it on her again.

She only shook her head, and repeated her objection in other words.

"He has been intimate enough with me to ask me to be his wife. He has stood high enough in my estimation to obtain my consent. I can't tell him to his face that he is the most contemptible of living creatures, after that!"

"But, my dear Miss Rachel," I remonstrated, "it's equally impossible for you to tell him that you withdraw from your engagement, without giving some reason for it."

"I shall say that I have thought it over, and that I am satisfied it will be best for both of us if we part."

"No more than that?"

"No more."

"Have you thought of what he may say, on his side?"

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"He may say what he pleases."

It was impossible not to admire her delicacy and her resolution, and it was equally impossible not to feel that she was putting herself in the wrong. I entreated her to consider her own position. I reminded her that she would be exposing herself to the most odious misconstruction of her motives. "You can't brave public opinion," I said, "at the command of private feeling."

"I can," she answered. "I have done it already."

"What do you mean?"

"You have forgotten the Moonstone, Mr. Bruff. Have I not braved public opinion, *there*, with my own private reasons for it?"

Her answer silenced me for the moment. It set me trying to trace the explanation of her conduct, at the time of the loss of the Moonstone, out of the strange avowal which had just escaped her. I might perhaps have done it when I was younger. I certainly couldn't do it now.

I tried a last remonstrance, before we returned to the house. She was just as immovable as ever. My mind was in a strange conflict of feelings about her when I left her that day. She was obstinate; she was wrong. She was interesting; she was admirable; she was deeply to be pitied. I made her promise to write to me the moment she had any news to send. And I went back to my business in London, with a mind exceedingly ill at ease.

On the evening of my return, before it was possible for me to receive my promised letter, I was surprised by a visit from Mr. Ablewhite the elder, and was informed that Mr. Godfrey had got his dismissal—*and had accepted it*—that very day.

With the view I already took of the case, the bare fact stated in the words that I have underlined, revealed Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite's motive for submission as plainly as if he had acknowledged it himself. He needed a large sum of money; and he needed it by a given time. Rachel's income, which would have helped him to anything else, would not help him here; and Rachel had accordingly released herself, without encountering a moment's serious opposition on his part. If I am told that this is mere speculation, I ask, in my turn, What other theory will account for his giving up a marriage which would have maintained him in splendour for the rest of his life?

Any exultation I might otherwise have felt at the lucky turn which things had now taken, was effectually checked by what passed at my interview with old Mr. Ablewhite.

He came, of course, to know whether I could give him any explanation of Miss Verinder's extraordinary conduct. It is needless to say that I was quite unable to afford him the information he wanted. The annoyance which I thus inflicted, following on the irritation produced by a recent interview with his son, threw Mr. Ablewhite off his guard. Both his looks and his language convinced me that Miss Verinder would find him a merciless man to deal with, when he joined the ladies at Brighton the next day.

I had a restless night, considering what I ought to do next. How my reflections ended, and how thoroughly well founded my distrust of old Mr. Ablewhite proved to be, are items of information which, (as I am told) have already been put tidily in their proper places, by that exemplary person, Miss Clack. I have only to add —in completion of her narrative—that Miss Verinder found the quiet and repose which she sadly needed, poor thing, in my house at Hampstead. She honoured us by making a long stay. My wife and daughters were charmed with her; and, when the executors decided on the appointment of a new guardian, I feel sincere pride and pleasure in recording that my guest and my family parted like old friends, on either side.

CHAPTER II.

The next thing I have to do, is to present such additional information as I possess on the subject of the Moonstone, or, to speak more correctly, on the subject of the Indian plot to steal the Diamond. The little that I have to tell is (as I think I have already said) of some importance, nevertheless, in respect of its bearing very remarkably on events which are still to come.

About a week or ten days after Miss Verinder had left us, one of my clerks entered the private room at my office, with a card in his hand, and informed me that a gentleman was below, who wanted to speak to me.

I looked at the card. There was a foreign name written on it, which has escaped my memory. It was followed by a line written in English at the bottom of the card, which I remember perfectly well:

"Recommended by Mr. Septimus Luker."

The audacity of a person in Mr. Luker's position presuming to recommend anybody to *me*, took me so completely by surprise, that I sat silent for the moment, wondering whether my own eyes had not deceived me. The clerk, observing my bewilderment, favoured me with the result of his own observation of the stranger who was waiting down-stairs.

"He's rather a remarkable-looking man, sir. So dark in the complexion that we all set him down in the office for an Indian, or something of that sort."

Associating the clerk's idea with the very offensive line inscribed on the card in my hand, I instantly suspected that the Moonstone was at the bottom of Mr. Luker's recommendation, and of the stranger's visit at my office. To the astonishment of my clerk, I at once decided on granting an interview to the gentleman below.

In justification of the highly unprofessional sacrifice to mere curiosity which I thus made, permit me to remind anybody who may read these lines, that no living person (in England, at any rate) can claim to have had such an intimate connexion with the romance of the

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Indian Diamond as mine has been. I was trusted with the secret of Colonel Herncastle's plan for escaping assassination. I received the Colonel's letters, periodically reporting himself a living man. I drew his Will, leaving the Moonstone to Miss Verinder. I persuaded his executor to act, on the chance that the jewel might prove to be a valuable acquisition to the family. And, lastly, I combatted Mr. Franklin Blake's scruples, and induced him to be the means of transporting the Diamond to Lady Verinder's house. If any one can claim a prescriptive right of interest in the Moonstone, and in everything connected with it, I think it is hardly to be denied that I am the man.

The moment my mysterious client was shown in, I felt an inner conviction that I was in the presence of one of the three Indians—probably of the chief. He was carefully dressed in European costume. But his swarthy complexion, his long lithe figure, and his grave and graceful politeness of manner were enough to betray his Oriental origin to any intelligent eyes that looked at him.

I pointed to a chair, and begged to be informed of the nature of his business with me.

After first apologising—in an excellent selection of English words—for the liberty which he had taken in disturbing me, the Indian produced a small parcel, the outer covering of which was of cloth of gold. Removing this and a second wrapping of some silken fabric, he placed a little box, or casket, on my table, most beautifully and richly inlaid in jewels, on an ebony ground.

"I have come, sir," he said, "to ask you to lend me some money. And I leave this as an assurance to you that my debt will be paid back."

I pointed to his card. "And you apply to me," I rejoined, "at Mr. Luker's recommendation?"

The Indian bowed.

"May I ask how it is that Mr. Luker himself did not advance the money that you require?"

"Mr. Luker informed me, sir, that he had no money to lend."

"And so he recommended you to come to me?"

The Indian, in his turn, pointed to the card. "It is written there," he said.

Briefly answered, and thoroughly to the purpose! If the Moonstone had been in my possession, this Oriental gentleman would have murdered me, I am well aware, without a moment's hesitation. At the same time, and barring that slight drawback, I am bound to testify that he was the perfect model of a client. He might not have respected my life. But he did what none of my own countrymen had ever done, in all my experience of them—he respected my time.

"I am sorry," I said, "that you should have had the trouble of coming to me. Mr. Luker is quite mistaken in sending you here. I am trusted, like other men in my profession, with money to lend. But I never lend it to strangers, and I never lend it on such a security as you have produced."

Far from attempting, as other people would have done, to induce me to relax my own rules, the Indian only made me another bow, and wrapped up his box in its two coverings without a word of protest. He rose—this admirable assassin rose to go, the moment I had answered him!

"Will your condescension towards a stranger, excuse my asking one question," he said, "before I take my leave?"

I bowed on my side. Only one question at parting! The average in my experience, was fifty.

"Supposing, sir, it had been possible (and customary) for *you* to lend me the money," he said, "in what space of time would it have been possible (and customary) for *me* to pay it back?"

"According to the usual course pursued in this country," I answered, "you would have been entitled to pay the money back (if you liked) in one year's time from the date at which it was first advanced to you."

The Indian made me a last bow, the lowest of all—and suddenly and softly walked out of the room.

It was done in a moment, in a noiseless, supple, cat-like way, which a little startled me, I own. As soon as I was composed enough to think, I arrived at one distinct conclusion in reference to the otherwise incomprehensible visitor who had favoured me with a call.

His face, voice, and manner—while I was in his company—were under such perfect control that they set all scrutiny at defiance. But he had given me one chance of looking under the smooth outer surface of him, for all that. He had not shown the slightest sign of attempting to fix anything that I had said to him in his mind, until I mentioned the time at which it was customary to permit the earliest repayment, on the part of a debtor, of money that had been advanced as a loan. When I gave him that piece of information, he looked me straight in the face, while I was speaking, for the first time. The inference I drew from this was —that he had a special purpose in asking me his last question, and a special interest in hearing my answer to it. The more carefully I reflected on what had passed between us, the more shrewdly I suspected the production of the casket, and the application for the loan, of having been mere formalities, designed to pave the way for the parting inquiry addressed to me.

I had satisfied myself of the correctness of this conclusion—and was trying to get on a step further, and penetrate the Indian's motives next—when a letter was brought to me, which proved to be from no less a person than Mr. Septimus Luker himself. He asked my pardon in terms of sickening servility, and assured me that he could explain matters to my satisfaction,

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if I would honour him by consenting to a personal interview.

I made another unprofessional sacrifice to mere curiosity. I honoured him by making an appointment at my office, for the next day.

Mr. Luker was, in every respect, such an inferior creature to the Indian—he was so vulgar, so ugly, so cringing, and so prosy—that he is quite unworthy of being reported, at any length, in these pages. The substance of what he had to tell me may be fairly stated as follows:

The day before I had received the visit of the Indian, Mr. Luker had been favoured with a call from that accomplished gentleman. In spite of his European disguise, Mr. Luker had instantly identified his visitor with the chief of the three Indians, who had formerly annoyed him by loitering about his house, and who had left him no alternative but to consult a magistrate. From this startling discovery he had rushed to the conclusion (naturally enough I own) that he must certainly be in the company of one of the three men, who had blindfolded him, gagged him, and robbed him of his banker's receipt. The result was that he became quite paralysed with terror, and that he firmly believed his last hour had come.

On his side, the Indian preserved the character of a perfect stranger. He produced the little casket, and made exactly the same application which he had afterwards made to me. As the speediest way of getting rid of him, Mr. Luker had at once declared that he had no money. The Indian had thereupon asked to be informed of the best and safest person to apply to for the loan he wanted. Mr. Luker had answered that the best and safest person, in such cases, was usually a respectable solicitor. Asked to name some individual of that character and profession, Mr. Luker had mentioned me—for the one simple reason that, in the extremity of his terror, mine was the first name which occurred to him. "The perspiration was pouring off me like rain, sir," the wretched creature concluded. "I didn't know what I was talking about. And I hope you'll look over it, Mr. Bruff, sir, in consideration of my having been really and truly frightened out of my wits."

I excused the fellow graciously enough. It was the readiest way of releasing myself from the sight of him. Before he left me, I detained him to make one inquiry. Had the Indian said anything noticeable, at the moment of quitting Mr. Luker's house?

Yes! The Indian had put precisely the same question to Mr. Luker, at parting, which he had put to me; receiving, of course, the same answer as the answer which I had given to him.

What did it mean? Mr. Luker's explanation gave me no assistance towards solving the problem. My own unaided ingenuity, consulted next, proved quite unequal to grapple with the difficulty. I had a dinner engagement that evening; and I went up-stairs, in no very genial frame of mind, little suspecting that the way to my dressing-room, and the way to discovery, meant, on this particular occasion, one and the same thing.

WERE THEY GUILTY?

DERIVED FROM A FRENCH TRIAL.

I.

The Velay is a volcanic district, contiguous to Auvergne, in quite the southern part of the central region of France. It is wild and picturesque, bearing unmistakable marks of the fires that raged there at no distant period, geologically speaking. Its climate enables it to produce all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life, making it a phenomenon of good living and cheapness. Its inhabitants are careful, cautious, and prudent, not to say parsimonious and cunning; still, with a good conscience and a contented mind, a man might take up his residence in worse places than this.

One of its oldest and wealthiest families was represented, in 1835, by Monsieur and Madame the Comte and Comtesse de la Roche-Négly de Chamblas—the French noblesse are fond of affixing the title of one property to that of another, so as to make quite a string of titles—who had an only child, Théodora. Mademoiselle Théodora, past the bloom of youth and unendowed with the graces of her sex, was an excellent match nevertheless. Consequently, on the 1st of July of that year, she was married to M. Louis Vilhardin de Marcellange, who belonged to an honourable and numerous family of Moulins. The alliance, at first sight, appeared to be suitable in respect to birth, fortune, and education, if not as to age and mutual affection, and at the outset promised happily.

One cause of this was the constant friendship which M. de Chamblas testified for his son-in-law; for, with both the contracting parties, the marriage had been mainly a matter of business. Théodora, as well as her future husband, had coolly calculated everything relating to the budget. M. de Marcellange was young and industrious; his expectations were good; but all he brought was an estate worth one hundred and twenty thousand francs, with fifteen thousand francs' worth of debts incurred to meet the wedding expenses. Mademoiselle de Chamblas, as an only daughter, would one day have a considerable fortune; but for the present her circumstances were not more independent than her husband's. They therefore agreed to beg her father to grant them a lease of the Chamblas estate at a moderate rent. It would afford them the means of paying off the debts and increasing their common revenue.

M. de Chamblas readily consented, and the couple established themselves at Chamblas; but his death, which happened shortly afterwards, placed them in a difficult position. Madame de Chamblas had made over all her property to her daughter, reserving to herself the usufruct for life. Her husband's death gave her the right to claim forty thousand francs in ready money and an annuity of two thousand four hundred

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francs a year. Reluctant to sacrifice property worth a hundred and fifty thousand francs M. de Marcellange thought the best thing he could do was to persuade his mother-in-law to come and live with him. In an evil hour for all parties, she consented.

Madame de Chamblas, then at Lyons, had long been living there separate from her husband, indulging in all the pleasures of a wealthy city. Ostentatious and expensive in her habits to an extent rarely seen in economical Auvergne, she kept up a large establishment, and gave herself airs of superiority to an extent incredible to those unacquainted with French provincial aristocrats. The Revolution has altered the position of that class, but it can hardly be said to have lowered their pride.

Soon after the arrival of Madame de Chamblas her daughter felt her influence. The mother, accustomed to the routine of aristocratic life, felt ill at ease in her rustic home. Shepherds and goatherds were all very well in a water-colour landscape or in a ballet, but who could be expected to take interest in their actions, to speak their language, or enter into their thoughts? The first time M. de Marcellange mentioned in her presence that at the last fair his sheep fetched eighteen francs a head, she raised her eyebrows and lowered the corners of her mouth.

The ladies then made, or affected to make, the discovery that M. de Marcellange's name was plain Vilhardin, without any "de." Before his marriage he had been a tax-collector—something little better than a sort of clerk. Madame de Marcellange lent only too ready an ear to her mother's depreciation of her husband.

Meanwhile, a child was born; and in course of time, Théodora became again enceinte. That was no reason for her remaining at Chamblas, which became more unendurably rustic every day. Her mother decided that they would go and live in the neighbouring town, Le Puy. There at least they could receive decent company, and the drawing-room would not smell of the stable. Soon, M. de Marcellange himself was banished. When he visited the house, he was put into a smoky chamber, good enough, however, no doubt, for him. They lived in grand style; the frugal ways of Chamblas were mentioned only with a disdainful smile. Nevertheless, their showy way of life did not make them forget their own private interests. The old lady vigorously urged her pecuniary claims, and her daughter, in the hope of pin-money, backed her without compunction. They refused to board M. de Marcellange's servants; then Madame de Chamblas pleaded for a legal separation of the married couple, and the husband was refused admittance into the house of his wife.

M. de Marcellange gained his suit; the court refused a separation. It was clear that the lady's marriage portion was in no danger of being dissipated. M. de Marcellange, who, in spite of the manner in which she treated him, always appeared much attached to his wife, wrote to her, and got friends to speak to her to bring about a reconciliation. His advances were repelled. As those ladies affected great religious zeal, and took pains to attract the higher clergy especially, he made a friendly proposition through the Archbishop of Lyons; but all his overtures were in vain. M. de Marcellange, they said, had ceased to belong to their family. In the course of a few months, he lost both his children. The natural ties, which had been insufficient to prevent scandalous divisions, were broken. The connexion of the husband and wife was now merely nominal. She did not even condescend to acquaint him with the death of the second child; he heard of it by chance from the mouth of a stranger. He summoned his wife, by a bailiff's warrant, to renew their conjugal union. After what had already passed, he could hardly be surprised by her refusing to obey the order.

II.

FOURTEEN months after the ladies had failed to obtain a legal separation, a tragic event suddenly afforded them the relief they had been so ardently wishing for. On the first of September, 1840, at about half-past eight in the evening, the farm servants of Chamblas were assembled in the kitchen, situated on the ground-floor of the château. According to the custom of the country, their master, M. Louis de Marcellange, was sitting with them beside the hearth, on which an enormous log was burning; for although it was only the beginning of autumn, a chilly blast had been sweeping down from the summit of the Velay mountains.

M. de Marcellange was chatting cheerfully, with his back towards a large window looking into the farmyard. Suddenly, there was a flash, a report, a shattering of glass. M. de Marcellange tottered an instant on his chair and then fell forward into the ashes. There he lay motionless; he was dead.

Then followed a moment of stupefaction. At first, the persons present did not understand what had happened. It was not till those nearest had lifted the body, from whose mouth the blood was slowly trickling, and had ascertained that it gave no sign of life, that two or three of them ran to the door and searched the yard. It was too late; the murderer had disappeared.

The night was dark; the wind howled and whistled in the wayside chesnut-trees; they went no further in pursuit. On re-entering the house, all crowded round the body; the cook vainly bathed the temples and the lips with vinegar. Several of them wept; for M. de Marcellange was a good master, simple, affable, and ever ready to assist the necessitous.

"It's strange, all the same," said one of the farm servants who watched a hound licking his master's cold hand as the body lay stretched upon the table. "The sporting dogs were here when the shot was fired; yet they gave no warning."

"It's stranger still," said a ploughman, "that the yard-dog did not give tongue. It must have been somebody whom he knew."

"We must send to Le Puy for a doctor," said another.

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"To what purpose, I should like to know? Our master is dead. Better acquaint the ladies with what has happened."

They looked at each other inquiringly; nobody undertook to perform the task. Prudential considerations were uppermost; it was needless to compromise one's self. They merely informed the mayor of the commune (Saint Etienne-Lardeyrol) in which the Château de Chamblas is situated.

Next day, the second of September, a messenger who was despatched by the mayor to inform the ladies of the event, was astonished at the coolness with which they received the news. A few hours afterwards the Procureur du Roi and a juge d'instruction arrived at Chamblas and opened a preliminary inquiry. They found the corpse still stretched on the kitchen table. A surgeon, who had been sent for, took from the body a bullet and a couple of buck shot. One rib was broken and one lung destroyed. Death must have been instantaneous.

During the examination a man entered, dressed like a person of the middle class, with striped olive-green velveteen trousers, and wearing a black crape round his hat. His manner was that of a steward or maître d'hôtel in the exercise of his accustomed functions. His countenance was calm, but indicative of great energy. His complexion was dark; his raven-black hair covered his forehead down to the eyebrows. His face, and especially his lips, were swollen with recent marks of small-pox. When his eyes met the body, they sparkled with an expression of ferocious hatred. Although only a rapid flash, it was noticed by three professional observers, a brigadier and two gendarmes. They exchanged glances; the same thought had struck them all: "That man is the murderer!"

This person advanced and informed the magistrates that, in an adjoining room, a repast was served for them and some members of the Marcellange family. He waited at table. A notary there, M. Méplain, one of the victim's relations, could not repress a gesture of disgust when he approached him to change his plate. The juge d'instruction inquired the name and condition of this repulsive attendant. He was told that it was Jacques Besson, once swineherd, then farm servant at Chamblas, and then the ladies' confidential man after the separation of the husband and wife. M. de Marcellange had dismissed him in consequence of his insolent behaviour.

The juge d'instruction whispered to the brigadier, "There is a fellow with crape round his hat who I fancy is not sorry for what has happened."

"It is possible," said the brigadier, after a searching glance at the individual, "that I may have to arrest that important personage."

At the funeral, relations, neighbours, servants, everybody down to the driver who brought the ladies' confidential man to Chamblas, followed the body to the grave, many in tears. Jacques Besson alone remained at the château, eating in a corner, with a thoughtful air.

The authorities tried hard to discover the guilty party; several hundred witnesses were interrogated; in vain. Public opinion informed them that M. de Marcellange had not a single enemy in the neighbourhood; his death was the subject of universal regret. Darkness appeared to thicken round the crime. The peasantry, a needy and cautious race, could hardly be got to utter a word. It seemed as if their mouths were closed by some mysterious influence, the result of terror rather than of corruption.

As soon as the news was spread abroad, Baron Méchin, the Préfet of the Département de l'Allier, remembered that, at an evening party, some time before M. de Marcellange's death, a lady had requested to be presented to him. This lady, M. de Marcellange's sister, expressed her fears for her brother's safety during a journey he had undertaken. On being asked the reason of her apprehensions, she replied that her brother, whose interests were opposed to those of his wife and his mother-in-law, had for some time past dreaded attempts on his life. "If I am murdered," he often said, "avenge my death."

On inquiry, it was found that, during the last year of his life, M. de Marcellange had been filled with these apprehensions. A presentiment of evil took possession of him. Even before the rupture with his wife was complete, he believed that poison had been administered to him in an omelette served by Marie Boudon, his wife's maid. He unhesitatingly attributed the violent pains that followed to criminal designs. The death of his two children, taken off so soon one after another, excited in his mind the most horrible suspicions. Latterly, he often observed to his intimate friends that, but for the noise made by poor Lafarge's case, *he* would have suffered the same wretched fate.

Jacques Besson was the person whom he regarded as his future murderer. This individual, during the sixteen years he had been in the service of the De Chamblas family, had gradually acquired over them an ascendency which he could never extend to M. de Marcellange. When the latter, to check his forwardness, reminded him of his origin, it excited great indignation, which found expression in mysterious threats. His insolence increased with the family discord. He vehemently sided with the ladies, and had the audacity to insult his master by contemptuous and indecent sarcasms. M. de Marcellange's fears increased to such a pitch that he resolved to let the estate, to return to his native home, and to live with his aged father at Brandons, near Moulins. Preparations were already made to receive him. He had proposed starting the very day after that on which he was shot, at the early age of thirty-four.

After Besson's dismissal by the husband, he had been received by the wife and the mother-in-law, as if they thought his conduct praiseworthy. They petted the base-born menial all the while that they treated the husband as "a clerk," and would never pardon his "being so

friendly and familiar with humble folk." Although in all this there were strong grounds of suspicion, nevertheless considerable difficulties existed. At the time of the murder, Besson was recovering from a severe attack of smallpox; and it is curious that Madame de Marcellange had had that disease at nearly the same date, as if one had caught it of the other. Several witnesses stated that on the 1st of September Besson could scarcely walk. Now it takes two hours and a half to reach Chamblas from Le Puy on foot. Beyond this, nothing further could be learned from the peasantry. The reason gradually oozed out. "We will hold our tongues until Jacques Besson and Marie Boudon are arrested. They would serve us as they served M. de Marcellange."

A shepherd lad, André Arzac, employed at Chamblas, had let fall strange expressions during his master's life time, but persistently refused to explain their meaning; their tendency, however, coincided with that gentleman's fears. At last a peasant farmer, Claude Reynaud, mentioned that on the very day of the murder, at sunset, a man in a white blouse and striped olive-green velveteen trousers, armed with a double-barrelled gun, had cautiously traversed his piece of land. Claude, concealed behind a tree, had recognised him as Jacques Besson. Two other inhabitants of the commune had seen him cross the fields in the direction of the château. Twenty minutes before they heard the shot, they had noticed his entering the wood which encircles Chamblas. The silence of the dogs was now explained. The murderer had frequented the house; he also knew the supper hour and the place by the fireside which M. de Marcellange always occupied.

On the 19th of November Jacques Besson was arrested. The public seemed to have a load taken off its mind. A witness deposed to hearing Jacques say to one of his brothers (they were eight in all, the terror of the neighbourhood), "Either he or I must be put out of the way;" and to another, "It will be all over in a fortnight or three weeks." More evidence of this sort might have been collected, but for the inveterately mean and mercenary character of the witnesses.

In that locality everything was bought and sold; the peasantry knew no motive but money. They considered the investigation as a struggle between the two families; the highest bidder would command the evidence. The widow openly patronised the man whom public rumour pointed out as her husband's murderer, furnishing him in prison with various indulgences. She sent him there his own comfortable bed, under the pretext that he had not recovered from his illness; she also constantly supplied his meals, to the disgust of all aware of the fact. When reproached with the scandal, her excuse was, "I always thought Jacques Besson" (she ventured no stronger expression), "innocent of the crime imputed to him."

After an inquiry that lasted nineteen months, a first trial took place at the Assizes of the Upper Loire. It merely served to clear the ground of the falsehoods accumulated by corruption and terror The great results of the judicial inquiry were obtained at the second trial, which was held in the Assize Court of the Puy de Dôme, on the 22nd of August.

III.

At this trial, it was proved in evidence that M. de Marcellange had said that he would have been happy with his wife, but for Besson and the femme de chambre. He was sorry at not having had a post mortem examination of his children, because he was sure his wife had had them poisoned. He said, "I can understand their hating me; but what had the poor children done to be put out of the way?" He laid all the fault of their separation on his mother-in-law, whom one of her own relations had called "the fatal mother-in-law." He complained that at the house at Le Puy, Jacques Besson was better treated than himself. The servants insolently refused to obey his orders; they insulted him even in the presence of the ladies, who encouraged them in their behaviour by taking no notice of it. He felt assured that he would be murdered, and that before long; mentioning Besson, Marie Boudon, and another person, as the objects of his suspicion.

It was proved that Madame de Marcellange had said, "I have received a letter from my husband, but have not read it. If I heard that he, the carriage and horses, had all been shot over a precipice, I should not be sorry." Another time, looking into a barn, she said, "I should be delighted to see my husband threshed as they are threshing that corn." At the death of her second child, she said, "He is just as well dead as alive. How badly he would have been brought up!"

It was proved that after an altercation with Marie Boudon, she (Marie) said to M. de Marcellange, "You are lucky in having such a wife; in her place, I should take the law into my own hands." Afterwards she said to him, "Mind what you are about, monsieur; you are a stranger here, and something you do not want may happen to you." One day when people were talking of Claude Reynaud's having met Jacques Besson near Chamblas on the evening of the 1st of September, a miller who was present said, "Claude will hold his tongue; for if he don't there are two or three who will look after him." While the lawsuit for a separation was going on, the ladies sent a bad woman to M. de Marcellange, under pretence of changing some money in gold. While she was there, two men were posted to watch and report what had happened.

Other strange facts were brought to light. Mathieu Besson, one of the prisoner's brothers, asked a neighbour what he thought would be the result of the trial. The answer was, "They will cut off Jacques's head." To which Mathieu replied, "The ladies made him do it. It will be a disgrace to our family."

One day Jacques was in a thoughtful mood. An acquaintance asked what he was thinking about. He answered, "I am thinking that I

once kept pigs at Chamblas, and that I shall soon be master there."

Jérome Pugin, the ladies' neighbour, perfectly remembered that, on the 1st of September, about midnight or half an hour afterwards, their door suddenly opened and was violently closed again. His wife said "They have let in somebody who is very glad to be within doors." The presumption is that Besson, returning from the murder, was admitted then by Marie Boudon.

The olive-green pantaloons stuck to the prisoner like the poisoned shirt of antiquity. He was repeatedly seen wearing them immediately before and after the murder. He made a great deal too much fuss about the state in which the small-pox had left his feet. To one he simply showed them, complaining. To another he said, "They would accuse me, if I had not been ill. Misfortune is good for something." To another, "At any rate, they won't say it's me; I am too weak upon my legs." Pugin's wife could not help exclaiming, "How tiresome that Besson is! He talks of nothing but his feet."

The Comtesse de la Roche-Négly de Chamblas, the "fatal" mother-in-law, is called. The spectators try to make out, through her veil, the features of this haughty lady. She is attired, with rich simplicity, in a silk robe with a fur palatine. Her head-dress is a blue silk hood. Long black curls frame in her aristocratic countenance, which still appears young in spite of her eight-and-fifty years. The eyes are bright, the look assured; the lips, thin and compressed, are drawn down at the corners; the gait is stately and imperious. She answers in a firm voice which does not betray the slightest emotion.

"M. de Marcellange had not made her daughter happy at the outset of their married life. After she went to live with them, she sometimes witnessed quarrels. She took no part in those discussions. She never—never—never—heard of her son-in-law's being poisoned by an omelette prepared by her servants. He had not complained bitterly of Besson's and Marie's conduct, nor had they mixed themselves up in any dispute. In *her* house, servants were kept in their places. On the 1st of September Besson remained at Le Puy. He went to bed at eight o'clock. He did not go out *at all* on the evening of that day. He took a walk before going to bed, *but not far*. She and her daughter came home at nine in the evening. No one returned to the house about midnight or one in the morning. Besson, although in her service, often spent part of the week at Chamblas. It was because he had work to do; there was no other motive. She had heard of disputes between Besson and her son-in-law, but never thought them serious. After the separation, some members of the family tried to bring about a reconciliation. She never was opposed to it—never!"

After this examination, sustained without flinching, she resumed her place, motionless and disdainful, amongst the witnesses.

A woman named Chamard declared that, after the separation, she saw Besson walking in the wood with the Dames de Chamblas, with each of them hanging on either arm. She perhaps saw something more; her master had heard her say that Besson "did things which ought not to be done."

The widow, Théodora de la Roche-Négly de Chamblas, is introduced next. She is dressed in black; a deep veil covers her face. She states her age to be thirty-eight; but her natural plainness and the effects of small-pox make her appear considerably older. Her likeness to her mother is striking. Her answers, at first scarcely audible, are soon given in a firmer tone. You may hear a pin drop in the court. The president politely requests her to raise her veil, and is obeyed immediately.

This witness can give no particulars respecting her husband's murder; does not know if he had enemies in that locality, having long been separated from him. Their quarrels were occasioned by her mother's claims; M. de Marcellange wished to separate, because she desired to remain with her mother. She did not answer her husband's summons to return, because her health did not allow it. Chamblas is a very chilly residence, and her own wish was to winter at Le Puy. She believes that the violence of their discussions has been much exaggerated. It is false that her husband had said that he would have lived on good terms with her but for her mother. There was an interval of four months between the deaths of her children. She did not acquaint her husband with the second death; the illness was very short. After that her husband made advances; as to her reception of them she can say nothing. Besson caught the small-pox soon after she had had it. She knows nothing of any one's entering late on the 1st of September; she was fast asleep. Knows nothing of the attempted poisoning; never wished her husband to be threshed like corn, nor shot over a precipice, &c., &c. Had sent luxuries to Besson in prison, not believing him guilty. To a juryman, who asked whether her husband was not put into an uncomfortable chamber, she answers, "It was the only one at her disposal." She retires, and takes her seat beside her mother, without manifesting the slightest emotion.

IV.

There was another important witness to be examined—the femme de chambre, Marie Boudon. She was not forthcoming. Madame de Marcellange was recalled to explain her servant's absence.

"She did not know what had become of the girl. After Marie left her service, *she wanted her back for a journey*; and since then she had never seen nor heard of her, nor inquired after her. Did not know how she subsisted; had not sent her money, and did not leave any with her. She took her to Aix, in Savoy, and left her there; she wished to remain, as she liked the place. It was no business of hers to persuade Marie to the contrary."

These replies, uttered in a hard, cold voice, stupefied the audience. They were convinced that Marie Boudon's absence involved some terrible mystery. The witness again retired,

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pale but impassive. The people against whom her silk dress rustled as she passed, shrunk back with instinctive aversion. Attempts to ascertain from the comtesse what had really become of Marie Boudon were equally ineffectual. Every one suspected foul play.

The pleadings on either side were finished. To a final question, Besson replied by vehemently protesting his innocence. The jury retired to their room, and in five-and-twenty minutes returned with a verdict of Guilty, without extenuating circumstances. Besson's composure could hold out no longer; a livid pallor overspread his countenance; his bloodshot eyes rolled in their orbits. The president pronounced sentence of death. The condemned man hid his face in his hands; his legs bent under him; they dragged him away.

This, strange as it may seem, was not the final catastrophe. In consequence of a legal flaw in the proceedings, the case was sent to be tried again before the Assize Court of the Rhône at Lyons. As far as regarded the prisoner, the whole ground had to be gone over again. The entire country was in a state of excitement. At Lyons, even more than at Le Puy, public curiosity was fixed on the mother and daughter. The popular instinct felt that the real interest of the trial centred in them. But the general expectation was again disappointed. A few days before the assizes were opened, it was noised about that the ladies, summoned by writ, could not be found at any of their usual residences. It was said they were hidden in some convent, or that they had fled to Sardinia. Neither could Marie Boudon be discovered. Those significative facts spoke for themselves.

In all its leading points the trial was a repetition of the former one. At last, both the prosecution and the defence had finished the task which had taken more than a couple of years to complete. The president summed up impartially, requesting the jury to decide three questions: the first, concerning wilful homicide; the second, premeditation; the third (in case of a negative answer to the first), the prisoner's complicity in the crime.

During the absence of the jury the witnesses from the Velay gave a final proof of their proverbial habits. They showed great anxiety to receive their pay, carefully secured it in their leather purses, and almost all went away without waiting to hear the verdict.

In five-and-thirty minutes the jury returned, answering by a majority "Yes" to the first question; by a majority "Yes" to the second; and silent as to extenuating circumstances. Besson, who was recalled to hear the verdict read, did not seem to comprehend its meaning. But when the procureur-general called for the sentence of death upon him and its execution in one of the public places in Le Puy, the strength which had kept him up gave way at once; his head drooped, he wept, he dried his eyes mechanically; and when, after sentence was pronounced, the gendarmes led him away, they were obliged to support him until he reached the prison in a fainting state.

On the 29th of December, 1842, the convict appealed against the sentence. On the 17th of February, 1843, the Court of Cassation rejected his appeal. When Besson learnt that there was no further hope, he wept profusely. But, in spite of all appeals made to him, he refused to utter a word of avowal. "What would be the good of speaking?" he asked. "It would get a good many people into trouble." Then he added, "What daunts me is not my death; I would just as soon make an end of it as not; it is that frightful journey (to the place of execution) which will seem everlasting."

On the 27th of March, 1842, he was put into a postchaise escorted by gendarmes. He was calm during the first half of the journey. But when, peeping through the blinds, he caught sight of the wild hills and pine woods of the Velay, he became greatly agitated. At the glimpse of Saint Holstein, his native village, and the road leading to Chamblas, he sobbed convulsively. An hour afterwards he had the torture of feeling the carriage mount the slope of Mont Anis, on which the town of Le Puy is situated.

Next day he walked through an immense crowd from his prison to the Martouret. His step was firm, his countenance resigned. The only indication of inward suffering was an ashy paleness, which his black beard rendered still more striking. On reaching the guillotine he struggled for an instant with the executioner's assistants; a moment afterwards he carried into eternity the secret of the mother and daughter. Were they the victims of circumstances? or were they guilty?

SUN-RAYS.

THE rising sun with radiant finger raised
Points to his realms above,
To guide a world benighted and amazed,
For there stand God and love.

At noon upmounted to his lordliest height,
Full in his noble prime;
The sun sends down his ladders of the light,
And yet no thought will climb.

Wearied at length his fiery wrath is hurled,
Red on the evening sky;
Till every cloud is blushing for a world
That will not look on high.

RICH AND POOR BANKRUPTS.

SOME years ago I was in business as a builder. Like too many who follow that calling, I commenced with a capital which was far too small to do any good with, and I worked nearly all the undertakings I had in hand upon the borrowing system. If I saw or happened to find anywhere near London a piece of ground which was to be let on what is called a building lease, I rented it, and so soon as I had money enough at my banker's to pay the labourers a few weeks' wages, I set to work, and ran up half a dozen or more houses. The bricks cost me little, for I always made them myself, and generally con-

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trived to have a brick-yard close to where I was building. The timber, tiles, carpentering-work, and other necessary outlays, I paid for; and to raise money for this purpose I got accommodation bills accepted by a brother-builder, and had them discounted in what is called a regular business-like manner, at the bank where I kept my account. In return for the bills which he accepted for me, I accepted bills for my friend the other builder, which he in turn discounted at *his* bank, also in a regular business-like manner. What we were always careful of was that there should be no clashing of interests, and that his bank should not know that he accepted bills for me, nor mine know that I accepted bills for him. I had also other dummies to which I applied from time to time to accept bills for me—of course for a consideration—and these bills served me either to pay away as cash or else to get discounted at my bank. By the time I had run up the shell of some half-dozen or so of houses, I generally found my resources, both real and fictitious, at so low an ebb that I was only too glad to mortgage the buildings in their unfinished state, and I not unfrequently was able to turn a penny by obtaining more on mortgage than I had expended in building the houses.

Of late years a class of men has arisen in England who are a sure source of wealth to those who, like myself, are always anxious to raise money upon questionable securities. I allude to persons who are known generally as having "been in Australia." These have almost always gone out to the antipodes as poor men—labourers, in fact—and after ten or fifteen years of labour, and toil, and economy, they return to England with what is to them a mine of riches—say from three to ten thousand pounds. Of business and business life in the old country, they know nothing whatever. The small rate of interest allowed on money in all safe securities disgusts them, and, having plenty of time on their hands, they look about for something that will yield them ten or twelve per cent, such as they have been accustomed to in Tasmania, Victoria, or New Zealand. If they took the advice of men well acquainted with England, they would get on; but unfortunately—at any rate, in most instances—they mistrust every one but themselves, and when they find an investment that promises a large rate of interest, if friends try to dissuade them from touching it, they immediately believe that those who advise them are anxious either to procure it for themselves or to persuade them to invest in something in which they have an interest. It is to catch one of this class of men that advertisements like the following (which is one of the many I inserted in the penny daily papers) are addressed:

TO CAPITALISTS.—Wanted to Borrow, upon Copyhold Property worth 3000*l.*, the sum of 1000*l.* This advertisement being bonâ fide, no agent will be treated with.—Apply, by letter, to H. H., 76, Java-street, N.W.

Of course H. H. (otherwise myself) was not long in waiting for an answer, and an appointment being made at a tavern in the City, I found, as I expected, that the proposed lender was one of the numerous men who had "been in Australia," and had a small capital which he wanted to invest. I had, however, to show great tact in the management of my fish both before and after he was hooked. At first I pretended that it was no matter now whether I obtained the loan or not, for I expected "to make other arrangements." However, I said that I would not mind showing Mr. Andrews, (this was the name of the capitalist), the property that was to be mortgaged. The next day but one, having in the mean time given orders that a double number of men should be employed on the buildings, I took Mr. Andrews to the spot, situated at one of the extreme outside points of a north-west suburb of London. The land, which I certainly held at a very low building rent, was about four hundred yards in length, by about ninety in breadth. On it there were the roofed in, but otherwise quite unfinished, shells of half a dozen houses, the foundations being dug for as many more. I had expended upon these houses somewhere about five hundred pounds; and as they were anything but substantially finished even as far as they went, no builder in the land would have given me more than four hundred pounds to buy them out and out, nor would he have *advanced* me more than three hundred pounds by way of mortgage. But my Australian capitalist had turned his money in Melbourne by buying land cheap and selling it dear, and he thought that the rules applicable to this kind of traffic in that country were applicable to the same sort of business in England. The neighbourhood in which the houses were situated was one of those new and half-needy districts which are so common outside of London. However, it was not difficult to persuade Mr. Andrews that the place would improve, and that with the outlay of, say about another thousand pounds in finishing the six half-built houses, he might get a rent of sixty pounds a year for each of them. This, after deducting the ground rent and property tax, would leave him a net interest of something over nine per cent for his money, to say nothing of the chance he had, should the mortgage be foreclosed, of selling them at a considerable profit when the neighbourhood improved. All this I persuaded him of in order to prove that the houses were fully worth the three thousand pounds, at which I valued them. Of course, if he believed this, he would believe all the more that he could safely advance me the one thousand pounds I wanted. But I very soon saw that the object Mr. Andrews had in view was to purchase, not to lend on mortgage. Once aware of this, I humoured him, so as to cause him to persevere in his intentions, although pretending that I did not want to sell my property on any account whatever. Our coquetting as to the business went on for some days, until he made me an offer of two thousand four hundred pounds for the houses, the lease of the ground, and the build-

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ing material, the value of all of which, hardly reached six hundred and fifty pounds. As a matter of course, I was delighted with the offer, but I did not let the Australian see this. On the contrary, I pretended that the property had cost me upwards of three thousand pounds, and that I could not let it go for less, reiterating the old story, that I would far rather mortgage than sell, for I was only in want of a temporary loan, and so forth. The fact was that I wanted, if possible, to get an increase even on the price of two thousand four hundred pounds, and to secure this I got a friend to write me a letter, offering me two thousand eight hundred pounds for the lease and the houses, one thousand pounds to be paid in cash, one thousand pounds in three months, and the balance in six. To Mr. Andrews this stratagem served as a clincher. He at once offered me two thousand six hundred pounds in cash for the property, and the very same day we exchanged letters, which were to be considered as binding the bargain on both parties until the legal transfer could be made out. Thus I netted about five hundred per cent for the money I had invested in this speculation.

But my bargain with this Australian gentleman—who, by the way, has since barely realised three per cent on the money he paid me and on what he laid out to complete the buildings—does not by any means represent the nature of my dealings in general. I wish it did. If it had, I should never have found myself in the Gazette. The sale of which I have given the details was one in a hundred. I often succeeded in raising more money upon buildings and upon land leases than I had laid out on the property; but, on the other hand, what with paying for discounts, paying others to accept bills for me, and extra expenses in raising money at high rates, I invariably found myself behind the world. I had a small but comfortable house of my own at Dalston, and it was pretty well furnished. This I had settled upon my wife when we married, so that I felt safe as to our always having a roof over our heads, no matter how the wind might blow. And very glad I was that this precaution had been taken, when one fine day I had to read in the list of bankrupts my own name: "William Johnson, Cross-road, Dalston, and Stowe-street, Camden-town, builder and brickmaker, to surrender at the Bankruptcy Court, Basinghall-street, on the 3rd April."

I cannot in truth say that this announcement and event had been unexpected. For a long time I had seen that things were very fast going to the bad, and that unless my creditors would agree to take about a shilling in the pound of all that I owed them, I must, as they say in New York, "crack up." But before resolving what to do I went to see a solicitor, whose practice in bankruptcy was extensive, and who was famous for pulling men through the Basinghall-street court, even when their affairs were very shady. His advice to me was concise, but very determined. "Don't go bothering about deeds and rubbish of that sort," he said, "go in for bankruptcy, file your petition, make a clearance of all that hampers you, and begin again fresh." And I followed his councils. I had ready money enough to pay all legal expenses, and these went down as "assets" in my schedule. This at once put me on the best footing with my solicitor, and with all the minor officials who had to handle my affairs. The process was by no means difficult. Accompanied by my solicitor I went to the Bankruptcy Court, and there we had to go from one office to another, signing papers here and there with various officials. I had about one hundred pounds at my bankers, of this I received sixty pounds to live on whilst I was going through the process of whitewashing; allowing forty pounds to go into my schedule as "assets," for "appearance-sake," as my lawyer said. When my accounts were made up, they stood as follows: to creditors, unsecured, five thousand four hundred and forty pounds sixteen shillings and fourpence; to creditors, secured, one thousand two hundred and sixty-two pounds six shillings and eightpence; liabilities on bills of exchange, six hundred and forty pounds fourteen shillings and fourpence; making seven thousand three hundred and forty-three pounds seventeen shillings and fourpence which I owed; and against it I had property given up, forty pounds two shillings and tenpence; good debts, three hundred and forty-seven pounds sixteen shillings and twopence; bad debts, two thousand and seventy-one pounds four shillings and a penny; property in hands of creditors, one thousand two hundred and sixty-two pounds six shillings and eightpence, being a total of two thousand four hundred and fifty-nine pounds three shillings and a penny; of which two thousand and seventy-one pounds four shillings and a penny being bad debts (and very bad debts they were), were as *nil*. When I came to make a clean breast of my affairs, and to show them up officially, as it were, for investigation, I confess that my courage failed me, and I expressed as much to my solicitor. But that gentleman told me not to be an idiot. "I took a party through the court last week," he said, "who had twelve thousand pounds debts, and no assets whatever; and he got through as clear as twopence, and is now hard at work again at his trade." With this I plucked up courage, and began to think that, after all, my affairs did not look so black as I had thought at first.

But black or not black, I had to go through with the work now that I had taken it in hand; and bad as the process was, it had certain crumbs of comfort for the desolate. For instance, when I filed my petition there were two or three judgments out against me; and one creditor in particular, knowing that he could not put an execution into my house, as the furniture was settled on my wife, was determined to arrest my person. He tried very hard to do so for some days, whilst I on the other hand tried as hard, and more successfully, to avoid the sheriffs' officers. For more than a

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week I had never left my house without looking well to the right and the left to see that no suspicious character was near my door. I shaved off my whiskers, dyed my iron-grey hair to a jet black, adopted a very broad-brimmed hat, and bought a false pair of black moustaches, which gave me the appearance of a Frenchman. At my place of business the clerks had strict orders not to admit anybody unless they knew them to be perfectly safe. After living in this continual dread of capture, it was no small relief to have in my pocket a document called my "protection," by which I was secured from arrest. This paper I procured before leaving the court, when I went to file my petition, and it guaranteed me perfect freedom until what was called my "first meeting," when the choice of assignees from amongst my creditors would take place.

But what a joke it was, that first meeting! Of my creditors, who numbered twenty-five or thirty, not more than four or five were present, and these, seeing how very much my affairs were to the bad, declined to serve as assignees, evidently thinking that it was no use throwing either good money or profitable time away after debts which they had set down as irretrievably lost. As none of these gentlemen would act as my assignee, it became needful for the Bankruptcy Court to appoint one, which they did, in the person of one of their own officers, who is called the "official assignee."

The most extraordinary bear-garden-like proceedings take place in the Bankruptcy Court when a meeting for the choice of assignees is going on, or rather when three or four are going on at the same time, as is usually the case. There appears to be no order, no regularity of any kind observed. The creditors of the different bankrupts are crowding here and there, discussing in a loud tone the affairs of the estates in which they are interested; attorneys are looking out for their clients, and clients seeking their attorneys; whilst the various officials of the court attempt in vain to pay attention to the numerous persons, who seem all to ask questions or to want signatures to documents at one and the same time. Why it should be so I cannot imagine, but the Bankruptcy Court always appears to be perfectly different from every other court in England. Noise, confusion, and overcrowding seem to be its normal conditions, and how the commissioners are able to pay that attention to the cases before them which the natural difficulty of all money questions demands, has been a marvel to me ever since I became acquainted with these courts.

After my meeting ("the first meeting," as it is called) for the choice of assignees, my "protection" paper was renewed for another six weeks, until the day named for what was called my "last examination and discharge," and in the mean time I had to prepare my accounts and file them in the court for the inspection of my creditors. This work had, of course, to be done by a professional accountant, whose services cost me ten guineas, and very hardly earned the money no doubt was.

And here let me point out one or two of what seem to me the anomalies of bankruptcy proceedings. According to a legal fiction, I ought, after having been declared a bankrupt, to have been without any money whatever of my own, or I ought to have given up everything to my creditors. And yet, if I had done so, it would have been utterly impossible for me to prepare my accounts in the clear and explicit manner in which the court demands they should be written out, and which no one who is not a professed accountant could by any possibility accomplish. In like manner, when I determined to seek the protection of the court, I was able to file my petition because I had between twenty-five and thirty pounds at command. Had I not had this money I could not have paid the necessary fees of court, to say nothing of legal assistance, and I should have been obliged to go to jail, where I must have remained at least one month, and where, if my creditors were vindictive, I might have remained three or four.

My accounts were all filed in time, and upon the day appointed I appeared before the commissioner for my last examination and discharge. But I had not yet done with the court. One of my creditors opposed me. The attorney who represented him declared that I had contracted debts without a reasonable hope or expectation of paying them, that certain parts of my accounts were not clear, and that I ought to furnish a cash account for at least two years previous to my having been declared a bankrupt. The commissioner accordingly ordered an adjournment of my case for six weeks, directing me to furnish the accounts required, my protection from arrest being renewed for the interval. When the six weeks were over I came up again, and as the only creditor who objected to my getting my discharge had been privately "squared" by some portion of the money I owed him being paid, and bills at six and nine months being given for the balance, I was this time unopposed. My discharge was granted, and I stepped forth from the court with a load of some seven thousand pounds and more, having been wiped off, as it were, with a wet sponge. In less than a month I had re-hired my old premises, and was at business again in the old place as a builder. It is true that I had no capital to begin upon, but those who know how to manipulate stamped paper need never fear the want of money, provided they have the shadow of a shade of pretext to be thought traders. And as to the process of going through the court, I can only say that it resembles very much the process of a Turkish bath. It is a most unpleasant ordeal to contemplate, for those who have never tried it. But once make up your mind to face the hot ordeal, and it will be found that the results are most pleasant. It is true that there is a little badgering and brow-beating to be feared, but the person who is going through the wash-

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ing should remember how comfortable he will feel when it is all over. For my part, I don't care how often I have to face the court in Basinghall-street, provided that I leave behind me a good heavy load of debt each time. There are rich and poor bankrupts in this world, just as there are rich and poor men, good and bad horses, or cheap and dear houses. Is not this a great commercial country, and ought we not to measure everything in the land by the good old English standard of £ s. d.? Can a poor man buy the advowson of a comfortable living in the Church? Could any one without means obtain promotion in the army? Would it be possible for the best sailor amongst the post-captains of the navy to accept the command of a line-of-battle ship, or of a crack frigate, unless he had from five hundred to eight hundred pounds at command with which to fit and furnish his cabins? Could any lad be educated at Sandhurst for the army, at the universities for the Church, be articled to a solicitor for the law, or get his fees paid to be called to the bar, unless he had money, or, what is the same thing, friends who would lend him money? Then why should there not be a difference between rich and poor bankrupts? Pauper bankrupts don't fare well in this country, as you will see by the following account of a poor man's affairs when he got into difficulties, and which is only a fair sample of what happens in a score of cases every day in London.

The master carpenter, who worked for me, had a foreman named Stevens, a quiet, respectable man as ever lived, but terribly weighted, so to speak, with an infirm wife and five young children. Stevens used to earn his regular thirty-five shillings a week as wages, and never went near a public-house in his life. But somehow or other, what with having to pay doctors' fees and bills for medicine, and no one to look properly after his house, he got behind the world, and never seemed to recover the distance he had lost. He worked hard at odd jobs when he could get them, and did his best to pay what he owed; but as fast as he stopped up one leak, the water flowed in at another hole. At last a grocer, to whom he owed ten pounds odd, bothered his life out one day, and made some unpleasant remarks about people taking what they could not pay for. Stevens retorted, lost his temper, and gave the fellow a bit of his mind. The other, out of revenge, took out a county court summons, and Stevens had to appear at the court, losing thereby a day's wages, and getting into his master's bad graces for not being at his post to look after the men working under him.

When his case was called, the judge asked Stevens whether he admitted the debt. He said he did, but that he had not the means to pay it except by instalments, for he had a sick wife and a number of young children, and his wages were only thirty-five shillings a week. The judge asked him how much he could afford to pay a week towards liquidating the debt; and he replied that he could not give more than five shillings a week. To this his creditor, who was present, objected, saying that at that rate it would take forty weeks to clear off the score. The judge then said that he must pay ten shillings a week, and so the judgment was made out—the terms and conditions being, that if any one payment was behindhand, execution might be issued against the debtor for all that was due. Stevens left the court protesting that he would do his best, but that he feared he could not keep up the payments.

The next day he told his master what had happened, saying at the same time that any one of his creditors might serve him the same way, for he owed altogether to different tradesmen about thirty pounds. His master recommended him to file his petition as a bankrupt, and go through the court, but to do this he needed the sum of from twenty to twenty-five pounds; and, as he said, even if he could get the money—which he had no chance whatever of obtaining—it would have been better to pay his debts with it than to go through the court.

For three or four weeks Stevens managed to keep up his payments to the county court, although in doing so he incurred debts elsewhere. At last he fell behindhand with his instalments, and one fine morning a county court bailiff walked into the shop where he was at work, and took him off to Whitecross-street. He was not locked up because he owed the money, but was sentenced to thirty days' imprisonment as a punishment for contempt of court, in not obeying the order he had received to pay the debt in certain instalments. Of course his being thirty days in prison did not mend matters. He lost his wages, and lost his place as foreman. His master was a kind-hearted man, and helped the sick wife and children all he could whilst Stevens was in Whitecross-street. Moreover, although he had filled up his place as foreman, he kept an opening for him as a workman, and when he got clear of prison Stevens had regular work given him, although at reduced wages. He now only got twenty-eight shillings a week. But the most curious part of the law for *poor* debtors is that by imprisonment from a county court order, the debt is not purged. Stevens came out of Whitecross-street at the end of thirty days, but he owed the money just as much as he did before, although of course he was now far less able to pay it. He worked on under his old master for a few weeks, was unable to pay more than one instalment of the debt, and was again imprisoned, at the demand of the same creditor, and again for "contempt of court." This time he was sentenced to forty days' imprisonment.

Once more his master helped his family, and once more at the end of forty days did Stevens resume his work in the old place, worse off, and more broken in spirit than ever. Again, for the third time, did the same creditor get him locked up for "contempt of court," and a third time had he to remain a prisoner for the same

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debt. The third time his sentence was twenty-five days, so that for a ten-pound debt, which, after all, he had done his best to pay, Stevens suffered in one half year seventy-five days in prison, with the prospect of his wife and family starving had it not been for the help of his master. At last the poor fellow, in utter despair, sought refuge in the workhouse, to which his family had preceded him, for little by little every stick of furniture and nearly all their clothes had been sold or pawned. His master told me that he had been to see him in the workhouse, but that he was beyond doing any work, for he said that it would only be putting himself in the way of imprisonment again. With a sick wife it was well-nigh useless to attempt to emigrate, or even to go to another part of the country. And so you see there is one law for the rich bankrupt and another for the poor. If Stevens, instead of owing ten pounds, had been a financial agent, or a railway contractor — or even a builder — and if he had been some hundreds of thousands to the bad, he would have been a free man in a few weeks or months after he filed his petition. In the year of grace 1868, it seems not to be a crime to owe money, provided you owe enough. Our county court laws are certainly not a credit to us. As the master of a London workhouse once said to me, they provide plenty of helpless paupers for the ratepayers to lodge, clothe, and feed. I don't think that any one who reads how I got through the court, and how poor Stevens was punished for owing the trifle he did, will deny that in England there are very different laws for rich and poor bankrupts.*

EYE-MEMORY.

Among the public questions which are from time to time brought before us—in connexion, sometimes, with deeds of violence and bloodshed, sometimes with law proceedings of a less alarming nature, and affecting property rather than life—those in which disputed identity plays a part are not the least interesting and curious. There is generally much that is calculated to astonish us in cases of this sort. At one time we are amazed at the unhesitating manner in which a witness will speak to the identity of some one of whom he has just had a glimpse, and that under circumstances the least favourable in the world for observing even the chief features of a stranger's appearance; while, at another time, we are equally surprised to find some individual hesitating to identify a person with whom he has been in company for half an hour at a time, and whose countenance he has had special opportunities of studying.

A curious instance of this last phase of what may be called optical uncertainty was developed in the course of those fruitless investigations into the circumstances of the Bloomsbury murder, during the progress of which so many strange things came to light. The hairdresser, as may perhaps be remembered, who had fitted a false beard on to the face of the suspected man absolutely professed himself to be unable to identity that face when called upon to do so. Now, any hesitation upon such a point as this is, under such circumstances, a thing one can scarcely comprehend. It seems as if it could be hardly possible to perform such an office as this—of fastening on a false beard for a man—without having every feature and characteristic of his face impressed upon one's memory, sufficiently, at any rate, to render his recognition, within any reasonable time, a thing of certainty. Yet here is the evidence of this barber tending distinctly in a contrary direction. But the difficulties connected with the identification of one human being by other human beings were exemplified throughout that Bloomsbury inquiry. The suspected man was tall; he was not tall; he was of middle stature; he was fair; he had light whiskers; he had a long beard. He appeared, at last, to have none of these characteristics, to be non-existent altogether, mythical. There was but one consistent witness who appeared throughout the case, and who could, and did, swear to him straight on without any hesitation or misgiving; but then it turned out, unfortunately, that the things sworn to by this otherwise most satisfactory witness were a series of the most shameless lies that were ever uttered by the human tongue.

In that Titchbourne cause, again, which is still before the public, what strong evidence is afforded of this uncertainty which attends the process of personal identification. Would any one believe that the relations and intimate friends of any young man—people who had had opportunities of getting well acquainted with his person, his ways, the "trick of his visage," his manner of speech, his very habit of thought—should not have been able, when he came back—after what was certainly a long absence, but still a man in his prime—to say "This is he," or "This is not he," with absolute certainty? It is wonderful, but it is so. Indeed, these cases of disputed identity are so numerous and so perplexing, and involve often such important issues, that one is tempted at times to wish that each individual could be labelled or tattooed with his or her name at the moment of birth, or in some other way stamped with a badge, so as to set all doubts on that subject at rest for ever.

But by far the most remarkable of recent instances, bearing upon this particular subject, is the case of the man lately found dead in the empty house at Hackney Wick. That a man's

* Both the stories related in this paper are—with changed names and other circumstances—strictly true. The writer has known labouring men and journeymen artisans, to be imprisoned under orders of county courts four and five times for the same debt, and after all had been gone through, the debts were not purged. In the present state of the law, if a creditor is vindictive, he may imprison his debtor again and again; and the county court must give him power to do so, it has no option.

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wife, only separated from him for three years, and having lived with him eleven, could make a mistake as to his identity, even though the face of the dead man was disfigured by decomposition, seems almost impossible. Her description, too, of the scar upon his hand—such description being given before she had seen the body—is very difficult to reconcile with the fact that she was mistaken. Yet that she was so one cannot rationally doubt. The evidence of the doctor who had attended the man, of his own brother, and subsequently of his wife is entirely conclusive, and is corroborated by that of the labourer who found the unfortunate lunatic spending a cold afternoon in February on a sand-heap cutting out a boat. His answers to this labourer were those of a madman; a madman had just escaped from a neighbouring lunatic asylum; the name of that madman was Heasman, and in his flight, he had carried off with him some boots belonging to another inmate of the asylum named Harnett; the name of Heasman was found on the dead man's linen, and the name of Harnett on a boot in the cupboard in which the body was found.

It is impossible to reject such evidence as this, and yet if we admit it, we must admit also that the evidence of the other claimant of the body, Mrs. Banks, the widow who had "minutely examined the remains on two occasions, and had not the least doubt that they were those of her husband," is worthless. The difficulty in which the arriving at this conclusion involves those who accept it is so great that they soon get suspicious, and some pains are taken, on the occasion of the coroner's inquiry, to elicit the fact that the widow would be a gainer by being able to *prove* her husband's death. This, however, turns out not to be the case. No elucidation is to be found in that quarter, and we are driven in search of an explanation to other and wilder speculations. Might the wish have been father to the thought—not the wish that the man might be dead, but the wish that the fate of the husband who had absented himself for three years might be certified. She might desire to marry again. A hundred reasons, in short, might exist why if he *was* dead she might wish to know it. And then as to the scar on the hand of the corpse, described so accurately by Mrs. Banks before she had seen the body, how do we account for that mystery? Scarcely by coincidence, the tallying of the description with the fact is too minutely accurate for that. Yet if we do reject the theory of coincidence, what are we driven to? To the conclusion that this Mrs. Banks had either met with some description of the body in which this scar was mentioned, or that some one who had seen the body had told her of it. The presence of the scar altogether adds to the difficulties of this difficult case. The doctor of the lunatic asylum who held throughout to the belief that the deceased was certainly no other than Heasman, had never noticed the cut; neither had his brother, nor even his wife. Yet this, which seems at first sight like an important defect in the evidence brought forward by the doctor, and by the Heasman family, is really of much less consequence than it looks to be. How many of us are there who have scores of old cuts or other injuries contracted in the days when we first got free access to pocket-knives and other edged tools, of which our nearest and most intimate relatives know nothing; or even when these friends or relatives have, by chance, knowledge of any such scars or other private marks which we may have about us, how many of them could describe the appearances accurately, or say whether the healed-up wound, or the inevitable strawberry-mark, was on the right hand or the left of the friend whom they were trying to describe?

But instances such as this, of great difficulty in identifying a dead body, are by no means uncommon. In the number of the Times which appeared on the 24th of March, 1866, there is a curious case recorded of a body found drowned and much decomposed, which was claimed by two young men as that of their father—a Mr. Etherington, and which they buried under that name. Some months after his burial, however, this Mr. Etherington walks into his daughter's house alive and well. Of course, under these circumstances, it becomes necessary to find out, since the body which had been interred was not that of Etherington, whose it really was, and then it comes out that a certain William Turner—who when last seen had been in a very wretched condition, covered with boils and sores, and suffering from ague, and who had told some one that he could never go back to live where he had previously been residing—had also been missing lately, and so it gradually got to be suspected that the body which had been found must really have been his. This suspicion soon became converted into an absolute certainty, when a portion of the neckerchief which had been found on the deceased was discovered in an odd corner of the very last lodging which William Turner had occupied.

This story is very like one authenticated by the coroner of Burton-upon-Trent, and communicated by him but the other day to the Times. Only in this latter case the body identified is that of the brother, and not the father of the persons claiming it; and, moreover, when this last comes forward, still there in the flesh, the question as to whose, after all, were the remains which were found in the Trent is left unanswered.

Another story something akin to both of these is quoted from the Annual Register by a correspondent of the Times on the 15th of April last. It was a woman this time whose body was discovered in the water (with marks of violence on it), and it was her own father who identified it. It was his daughter's body, he said, and so said the neighbours also, and she had been murdered, he was sure, by her husband, who always used her ill. His evidence was so convincing that at last this bad husband

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was sent for by the police, in order that he might be duly examined by the authorities. They came back after a while, unsuccessful as to the main object of their mission, but not unsuccessful altogether either. They had not been able to find the man, they said, but that mattered the less as they had found his wife—the old man's *murdered* daughter—alive and well, and had brought her back with them. So here is a case of a father wrong as to the identity of his own daughter, just as we have seen before two sons mistaken as to that of their father, and a wife in reference to her own husband—for that Mrs. Banks *was* mistaken, she has herself admitted at last.

These difficulties as to identification, which are so common, must be in some degree attributable to a certain sluggishness of the observant faculties which is very prevalent among us. A seeing, and at the same time a remembering, eye is a rare gift. No doubt some people are much more observant as to matters of this kind than others. If you go to some place, where there is any special thing to be seen, in company with one of these, you will be surprised when you come away, unless you are of the same observant nature yourself, to find how much more he will have seen than you have. No doubt the memory has something to do with this. The man not only sees, but remembers what he sees. This is something but not everything, and there can be no doubt that some people's eyes really do see more than others.

The most wonderful thing in this way, however, is the unhesitating manner in which men, and women too, will sometimes speak on these questions of identification, when the only opportunities they have had of forming an opinion have been such unfavourable ones that, to the ordinarily constituted mind, it seems nothing short of miraculous that they should have seen anything or anybody with any degree of distinctness or certainty. Cases illustrative of this phenomenon are, however, by no means uncommon. Thus we read of an old lady and her servant, living in some lonely country house, which is attacked in the dead of night by burglars, one of whom, bursting open a window, assaults the old lady, while another attacks the maid. This last resists violently, and in the struggle a portion of the crape worn over the man's face gets deranged. There is no light, or only the limited supply to be got from an upset rushlight, or an expiring lantern left on the window-sill by the thieves. Yet a month afterwards this servant girl goes to a court of justice and swears to her burglar, whom she has seen walking in the prison yard, in company with a dozen other gentlemen in similar difficulties.

So again with the unfortunate who falls into the hands of the garotters. He is attacked in some lonely suburban road, knocked on the head, half suffocated by the bear-like hug with which the operation of garotting seems generally to begin, the night is dark and there is not a gas-lamp within a hundred yards, and yet it will sometimes happen that a fortnight afterwards, when the victim of this assault is sufficiently recovered to give evidence in court, he will be able to identify the ruffians by whom he was assailed—or at least one of them—and that with little or no misgiving as to the accuracy of his memory.

Is this sort of memory—eye-memory it may be called—a special gift, the property of a special few, or may it be acquired and cultivated by any who choose to try after it? To a certain extent it may. I remember on one occasion having to pay a rather large sum of money by cheque into a certain bank, determining—as I knew it was not their practice to give receipts for cheques so paid—to take the precaution of specially noticing the personal appearance of the clerk to whom I gave the money, in order that I might be certain to recognise him if there was any subsequent misunderstanding in connexion with the transaction. My doing so turned out, of course, to be entirely unnecessary, but still the face which I had registered in my memory did remain there, and it is certain that at any time, within a month, I could easily have identified it.

And so in another way I have known instances of men engaged in literary pursuits who—having to report the particulars of some pageant or other notable scene, and knowing beforehand that a minute description of the external characteristics of such scene would be required of them—have brought this observant faculty to bear upon all the special peculiarities of the scene in question, registering them in that eye-memory of which mention has just been made, and holding the remembrance of them till such time as the circumstantial account of them could be written down—and no longer; just as by an act of ordinary memory men will retain in their mind difficult statistics and intricate calculations of figures till the occasion for which these have been required is past, and will then in due time forget them altogether.

These are all instances of the observant faculty brought into action at will, and they suggest irresistibly the possibility, and perhaps desirableness, of a further and more general use of that power than we most of us make. There is not the least doubt that we might cultivate this faculty more than we do, and often to useful purpose. When we find ourselves engaged in any transaction at all removed from the routine of ordinary life, and in which other persons besides ourselves are mixed up, we should by all means make a point of noting the external characteristics of such strangers, with a view to their subsequent identification if necessary. When the French gentleman accosts us in the public street, and begs us to interpret to him an address which he has got written down on a piece of paper—such application being immediately followed by a request for assistance of a more substantial kind—it is desirable to bestow a searching glance upon that French gentleman's physiognomy before declining the honour of a more protracted conversation with him. When the Hungarian

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officer again—he with the order—favours you with a call, and before you know where you are, spreads open on your dining-table a neat case containing examples of the wines of his native country, which he entreats you to taste, it would certainly be desirable to register the features of the Hungarian officer in your memory in case anything should be missing from the sideboard after this gallant gentleman has left the premises.

In all pecuniary transactions, again, in the course of which we pay our money to collectors of rents, to taxgatherers, representatives of charitable institutions, or other persons, coming to our places of abode without any badge of office with which to proclaim their genuineness, other than a bundle of receipt forms, which might be easily forged—in all such cases it would, no doubt, be only exercising a sensible and judicious precaution to take special notice of the personal appearance of the individuals in question, in case it should prove afterwards that such collectors were self-appointed and self-acting. There are some people, luckily, with regard to whom no such conscious face-registering is in the least degree necessary, their personal appearance being sufficiently remarkable to record itself mechanically on the memory. If the great Lablache, for instance, had been a taxgatherer, or the late Duke of Wellington a collector of contributions to some charitable scheme, there would certainly have been no necessity for any conscious exertion of the observant faculty in order that the features of either of them might be remembered. It is not usual, however, to be brought in contact with persons of such remarkable appearance as those just mentioned. The mass of people whom one meets with are mostly devoid of all very marked characteristics, and these can only be remembered by means of a careful, intentional exercise of memory, used in connexion with such scraps of individuality as they *may* possess. That such acts of face-registering would become easier by continued repetition, and that the eye's memory would become more and more active and truthful through being more habitually used, can hardly be doubted.

SISTER ANNE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER II. (CONTINUED).

I HAD not visited the village since my father's death, and the carriage had to drive me past the old red brick mansion which had been my home. I looked wistfully at the tall elms and beeches beneath which William and I had played. The great gate was open, and in the sunlight I saw a child sitting by the plashing fountain near which my father and Miss Græme had found me reading. The carriage drove on and the glimpse vanished, but not the thoughts it had called up. Of all that dear past, lost as well as dear, what remained to me now—the boy from whom I had parted that morning, and to whose mother I had promised that I would be true.

The sun was setting as I reached Rosebower; a red light flashed back from the windows but no one came forth to receive me when I alighted from the carriage. Mrs. Gibson had not got my last letter, and she was away on a visit with her daughter. So said a servant who did not know me. She added that Mr. William Gibson had unexpectedly arrived that afternoon, would I see him! I said yes, and he came forth. He was now a tall handsome man with a grave brown face, but alas! he was as nervous as ever and so shy and awkward that he made me feel very uncomfortable indeed. I did my best to put him at his ease, but the girl whose hand he had taken, as he spoke to her, by the sea shore, was now a young woman, "very stately," as he said to me later, and she evidently inspired him with a feeling akin to awe. Then he was so distressed that Rosebower should not be quite ready for me. Well it was a dreary place, and I wondered at myself for coming to it, whilst William Gibson showed me through the low ruins that looked so grey and chill in the twilight, and kept stammering apologies and opening windows and expressing regret at the neglected state in which I found the cottage. But he did more than all this. When he returned to his mother's house and sent me the servant to attend to my first wants, he also sent me everything he could think of as likely to add to my comfort. An arm-chair came up on his head to my room door and was wheeled in by the girl; then a small bureau followed, then a little table which would do for me instead of a work-table. I know not what else would not have come if I had not laughingly put an end to his proceedings by going out to him on the staircase.

"Now, Mr. Gibson," I said severely, "I am not going to allow any more of this. You are stripping Mrs. Gibson's rooms, and what will she think when she comes back?"

He looked chagrined and replied hesitatingly,

"This is such a wretched place for you, and—and—the things came out of a lumber-room no one ever looks at, no one ever uses them."

"At all events," said I, rather doubting this statement—they all came from his room—"I am amply provided for, thanks to you, and I really want nothing more." I wonder if I really was so handsome then, as he told me later, that he found me. There was something of it in his eyes, as, looking up at me from the bottom of the staircase, he muttered that Rosebower was a wretched place for one like me.

I had my way about the furniture; after that indistinct protest of which the purport, not the actual words, reached my ear, William Gibson vanished, and I remained alone. It was the autumn time and I felt very chill. The servant lit me a fire in the grate, and as it burned and crackled I looked around me and thought: "This is my home, the home I have chosen, let me make the best of it." I said the same words

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three years back, when I came here, but not in the same spirit nor with the same light hope in future good within my heart as I had then. Amongst the plans which I laid as I sat thus by the fire and saw the light playing on the mouldy furniture of Rosebower, my garden held a chief part, but William Gibson's zeal forestalled me there. Long before I was up the next morning he was working and toiling for me, setting flowers, trimming hedges, and doing all a gardener's part with far more than a gardener's zeal. I would have protested against this if I could have seen him, but I could not catch a glimpse of my kind brownie. Neither that day nor the next, not till his mother and sister returned and I called upon them, did I see William Gibson again. I could but thank him then; protest, when he had done all he could do and my little garden was one mass of blooming flowers, came too late, so I thanked him cordially; he heard me with a shy nervous smile, then glanced up at me with such frank adoration in his grey eyes that I should have been very blind indeed if I had not known the meaning of that look. So from the first I saw that William Gibson loved me. He never said it, not a word that fell from him ever implied it, but I saw it, and seeing his goodness I loved him too.

I loved him, but I did not know it, and was the happier for my ignorance. No thought of the future marred the sweetness of the present time, or passed like a cloud over the bright sunshine. I sometimes wondered why, though Mrs. Gibson was so prosy and Ellen so flippant, the evening I spent with them seemed so delightful, but even that wonder did not enlighten me. At last I learned the truth.

I used to speak of my brother with William Gibson, whose nervousness had much worn off. He listened to me with a marked attention that bespoke interest, and once he said, "You love your brother very much?"

"Of course I do!" I exclaimed, amused. "He is such a darling," I added. "Oh, if you were to see the letters he writes to me!"

"I should very much like to see them," promptly replied William Gibson; then, looking at me, he added, "Of course he is like you."

We happened to be alone in his mother's parlour, I sitting on a low chair, looking at the fire, he standing by the chimney, looking down at me. I felt myself turn crimson when he spoke thus. Why should William be like me, and why did William Gibson care for that likeness? Ah! I knew it, I knew it very well, and knowing it I was glad, in a vague, confused way, which I did not quite understand as yet. But, as I said, the knowledge came at last. I went as usual to Mrs. Gibson's on the next evening. My heart felt light and joyous; I had received a letter from my darling that morning; he was working hard to be a credit to me yet, and he was already quite fluent in German. How could I but be glad? In that bright mood, and with my letter to show to Mr. Gibson, I entered his mother's parlour, and, as usual, that dull, low room, so shabbily furnished, looked gay to me as a fairy palace. There was an antique charm about the old chiffonier; perfumed oil burning in a silver lamp could not have shed a purer light in my eyes than that of Mrs. Gibson's moderator. Everything was dear, everything was delightful about the place where I thought to meet William Gibson.

At once I missed him, at once I saw Ellen's red eyes and Mrs. Gibson's woful face, and with a cold chill at my heart I guessed what had happened.

"My dear boy is gone," plaintively said Mrs. Gibson — "gone to Poland for two years."

William Gibson was a civil engineer, and once or twice he had said something about going to the north of Europe, but still I had not anticipated a departure so sudden. I had been out rambling all day, and during my absence the summons had come, and been obeyed at once.

"Willie asked to be very kindly remembered to you," resumed Mrs. Gibson, in the same dolorous tone.

I heard her with my useless letter in my hand. He had asked to be very kindly remembered to me. He could not say more; but he could not say less either. This was his adieu, this our parting. By the keen pang I felt I learned how dear he had become to me, and by the changed eyes with which I viewed the house he had left, and the rooms in which I saw him no more, I knew how delightful had been his presence.

I was very sad when I went home that evening, and I cried myself to sleep. I was sad for many days; then I rallied, and Hope, who had folded her wings awhile, came and whispered some of her sweet nonsense in my ear. I was sure that William Gibson loved me; I was sure that he would be true to me; and I was sure that my love was his for ever. He was not rich, indeed, and his mother and sister were dependent upon him. I also had William my darling to see and to help on, but for all that we were not too poor to marry. Why should not my brother be a civil engineer, later? Happy dreams, happy hours, in which you came near me, turning Rosebower into a paradise. Two years did you last—two blissful happy years—during which all I knew of William Gibson was that he was well, and begged to be remembered to me whenever he wrote home.

He had been gone two years, and I knew he was expected home shortly, when my darling came back from Germany. I had sent for him, but he arrived a day earlier than I anticipated. I was sitting alone, thinking of him as I looked at the coal fire, when the parlour door opened, and a blithe voice said, "Sister Anne!"

I started up and saw him—tall, handsome,

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bright as sunshine, and so like his dear mother! I wept, and he laughed, and we were both too happy. My eyes feasted on his radiant face; and then to hear him saying, in his young voice:

"Sister Anne"—he always called me so—"you are prettier than ever!" Or, again, "Sister Anne, when will you leave this merry cottage and go back to the old house?"

"When you are a rich man, my darling," I replied, gaily.

I thought nothing of that speech of his then; I only thought that I had him back, that Mr. Gibson was coming, and that my cup of happiness was very nearly full; but when, the next day, William said to me, almost gravely, "So the old house is to let?" I began to wonder that he thought so much about it. I asked if he had seen it.

"Yes, I went round that way. It is a noble place, sister Anne. The gate was shut, but I could see the fountain. It was not playing."

"My darling," I said, with a little sigh—for when he spoke of the fountain the memory of many lost and happy hours came back to me—"we must not think of that now. You are to be a civil engineer, please Heaven, and civil engineers don't live in Elizabethan mansions, as a rule."

"Then I'll be an exception," he said, walking about my little parlour with his hands in his pockets, laughing so joyously that it made my heart glad within me to hear him.

But, alas! my gladness was all gone the next morning; for my poor boy was in a burning fever. Three weeks of suspense and misery followed; then he was saved, said the doctor; but, oh! how weak and languid, how pale and worn and altered! He had the strangest fancies. Nothing would do for him one day but to send me off to W. for some particular lozenges. I wanted the servant to go, but he grew pettish and fretful; she was stupid, and would commit some mistake, he said; I must go myself; and so, to please him, I went.

W. is two miles away from Rosebower, but I walked fast, and soon reached it. I despatched my errand quickly, and made haste home. I felt all eagerness to return, for, to say the truth, William Gibson had arrived that morning, and I feared he would call whilst I was out. To miss seeing him, even one day, seemed hard after so long a separation. My way home was up-hill, and I walked so swiftly that I was soon breathless. I was obliged to sit down by a stile and rest for a few minutes. A strong high hedge divided the broad field I had been crossing from the next. Along that hedge there ran a low path, which had been well known to dear Miss Græme and me in days gone by. I was thinking of her when I heard Ellen's voice close to me. I looked, but, though I could not see her, my heart beat fast; for I guessed to whom she was speaking. I was so moved that I could not stir; I could not even speak; I could only sit there, lost in a joy which soon passed away.

"I tell you she does not care about you, and never will," pettishly said Ellen. "I wonder you will think of her."

"I suppose I cannot help it," answered William Gibson's voice, rather sadly.

"She is so wrapped up in her brother that it makes me sick," continued Ellen.

"Have you seen him?"

"No; but I hate him, big stupid boy! What right has she to praise him so, and then throw it in my face that you are awkward, that you don't know how to sit on a chair, and that you tread on ladies' dresses?"

I heard Ellen, and felt petrified with anger and amazement. I started to my feet to contradict and deny, but they had already passed on. "No matter," I thought, as I too rose and walked away; "Mr. Gibson shall know the truth, Ellen. He shall know that the words you have so cruelly remembered and repeated to him were uttered eight years back when we were all children. He shall know it, though Heaven knows what he will think of me for volunteering such a confession!"

I could have cried with shame at the thought, and yet I was quite determined. No pride, no reserve should prevent me from undeceiving William Gibson. He should not think, no matter what the cost might be, that I slighted him because he was nervous and shy. I do not know how I should have done this, but I never had the opportunity. When I got home I found my poor boy once more very ill; he had a relapse that lasted weeks; and during all that time I never left him night or day. At length he got well again, and on a lovely morning in April I could take him down to the garden. He sat in an arm-chair, in the sun, looking at the early flowers, at the green hedge, at a broad field in which a cow was grazing, at the blue sky, along which little fleecy clouds sailed away; and he looked so like his dear mother that my whole heart yearned towards him.

"God bless you, my darling!" I could not help saying—"God bless you!"

He smiled, and was going to say something, when the garden-gate opened; two dark figures stepped between us and the sun, and, looking up, I saw Ellen and her brother coming towards us. As I saw them then, I see them still as I write. She, a tall, elegant, and beautiful girl of nineteen, with long golden curls and the freshness of a rose; he, pale, nervous, and much altered. Was that her doing? Had that lovely but very selfish sister improved her opportunity all this time, and stabbed him day after day with those little thrusts of unkind speech which can wound so deeply? She did not like me, that I had always known; but might she not have spared him? I suppose she did not wish him to marry. The sin sat very lightly on her conscience, however; for she came towards us with a happy smile on her rosy lips, and her charming face full of pretty dimples.

"Give William a good scolding, Miss Sydney," she said, gaily; "he wanted to go away

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without bidding you good-bye, but I would not allow that."

So he was going again—going, and I had not seen him once; and his sister and my brother were present, and what could I do or say now?

"I should have been very sorry not to see Mr. Gibson," I replied.

"I—I was afraid of intruding," he stammered.

I called Jane, and bade her bring out chairs; but Ellen interfered.

"Bless you, he has not a minute to spare," she said; "and he is going for I don't know how long."

I looked at him; I could not help it; and he has told me since how that look startled and staggered him. But he did not understand its meaning, I suppose; for he said a few words more, then he went. He went, and I could not call him back; I could not say to him, "Stay; I love you! Do not believe her; she is false, she is selfish; she wants to keep you unmarried for her own ends; but I love you. I esteem, I admire you, and I love you with my whole soul, with my whole heart!" I could say nothing. He took my hand, and it lay cold and passive in his, and did not betray the secret I would have laid before him so willingly. He went, and I let him go, feeling all the time that he took with him my little share of woman's happiness here below.

"What a great baby!" said my darling. My heart was very full. My love for him had cost me very dear; since, but for his relapse, William Gibson had never been lost to me; but I bless heaven that, heavy though my heart felt just then, neither that petulant speech of a boy, nor the heavy price I had paid for his love, could raise one bitter thought against him in my heart. I threw my arms around his neck and kissed him.

"God bless you, my darling!" I said. "God bless you—it shall make no difference."

"Why, sister Anne, you are not crying?" he said, with a gay laugh.

"What if I am?" I replied, trying to smile. "What if I am, you foolish boy? All my tears are not shed yet, are they?"

He patted my cheek and bade me not fret, for that he was getting well and strong again. I was then nearly twenty-four, and a woman of twenty-four can suffer and not show it. William never suspected, and Ellen never saw, my grief. She had robbed me of my great happiness, but I kept my sorrow sacred from her cruel eyes. The task was an easy one. She soon left the place and got married; her mother went to live with her, and died after a little while. Their cottage could find no tenant, and ere long became as wild and drearily forlorn as Rosebower was when I first saw it; and thus my link with William Gibson, who had gone abroad, as I learned, was utterly broken. Once I inquired after him from the agent to whom I paid the rent.

"Oh! I believe he has got married," the man replied—"yes, he is married to some foreign lady or other."

CHAPTER III.

Many women have such sorrows, and go through them, as I went through mine, with silent endurance. Time did its work with me, as it does with thousands daily; the wound healed, and only now and then a thrill reminded me of the old pain. Through some fond and foolish memory of the past, I suppose, I made my darling a civil engineer. He was in London away from me, working hard, and full of hopes of success; and I remained in Rosebower till the happy time should come that would reunite us for ever. On this dream I fed and lived, not unhappy though lonely; and day after day the stillness that was flowing over my life grew deeper, till once more it was broken.

I was coming in one evening from a long walk, when, leaning over my garden gate, and looking full at me, like the ghost of my former years, I saw William Gibson. He was much altered; a thin, worn, unhappy-looking man, verging on middle age; but I knew him in a moment. He did not stir until I stood within a few paces of the gate; then he opened it for me, and held out his hand in a calm, self-possessed man-of-the-world manner, which showed me that the shy nervous William Gibson was no more. We entered the house together, and what that first glimpse had revealed, everything I saw and heard rapidly confirmed. In a few brief words he told me his story. He had married a foreign lady, as I had been told, but his wedded life had proved miserable from the first day to the last.

"My wife was attached to another man," said William Gibson, very calmly, "and was forced into marrying me. She never forgave me the offence of having believed in her willingness, and I never could forgive her for robbing me of my liberty. After a few wretched years, during which I vainly tried to win her affections, we parted by mutual consent. She is living with her parents, and I am thrown back on solitude. You did well not to marry, Miss Sydney; you never ran the venture, and never paid the cost."

There was a touch of bitterness in his tone, but I did not seem to notice it. Where was the use? All was over; he did not know, he never must know, what he had been once to me, what I might have been to him. Only once more did we touch on the subject. Mr. Gibson stayed a fortnight in the village. I never met him all that time, and when he called on me again, it was to bid me good-bye. The autumn evening was chill, and I had a fire. He leaned forward, so as to get the heat, and the ruddy flame played on his bending face. My heart ached to see how pale and worn he was. Oh! what a different fate might have been his and mine, but for his sister! For a third time we were going to part, and this time there was no one by to check him or to keep me mute; but

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it was too late, for ever too late! We were both silent. At length, raising up his head, he said, abruptly:

"You little know what my life might have been but for you. You little know, Miss Sydney, that you once held my fate in your hands."

I looked at him till I could not see him for blinding tears.

"Do I not know it?" I asked. "Had I not seen it, though you never spoke; and did I not hear your sister Ellen speaking to you along the hedge as I sat by the stile, ten years ago? She sealed my fate and yours then. I do not complain, I forgive her; but do not blame me for your sorrows. She spoke, and you listened—and what could I do, Mr. Gibson? I was a woman condemned to silence; a woman compelled to wait for a wooing that came not. She repeated words that had been spoken many years, and used them against me, and you believed her, and had no faith in me, and what could I do? I never so much as saw you once before you left. Did you make one attempt, Mr. Gibson, to learn the truth from me? Not one. Remember that, and never reproach me for what was your own doing."

He looked at me like one transfixed, then his lip quivered and his eye grew dim.

"Then it might have been," he said, in a low tone—"it might have been!"

"Yes," I replied, trying to smile, "it might have been, and now it is too late; and even if it were not, we both have passed that time, and should bury it far and deep, and set a gravestone over it, with a hic jacet epitaph as final as any ever engraved in a churchyard."

He was silent for a while. I believe his heart was very full, and when he did speak at length, it was to tell me how dear I had been to him in these last days, which might have been so blessed. It was also then he said how beautiful he thought me when I came to live at Rosebower. Well, he was the first and last who ever told me such a tale, and as I stood on the hearth before him, with my hand clasped in his for our last adieu, I could smile at the pale face I saw in the tarnished mirror; poor pale face, as pale and as faded as these last years of my youth.

It was late when he at length said good-bye. I walked out with him through the chill garden, and parted from him at the gate, whilst he went on to the village inn where he slept. He left early the next morning, and I saw him no more. I have heard about him since then, but we have never met again. It is better so. Why go back to a lost past—lost and barren! I am not unhappy, though I cannot forget him, but I do not care to think of him in the time when he was my shy nervous lover. When I remember William Gibson, it is as a kind grave youth, who found me crying in the lonely parlour of Rosebower, and who, taking me by the hand, led me out on the shore, and there spoke words of wise and gentle comfort to a weeping girl.

About a month after his departure, my dear boy paid me a very unexpected visit. He was twenty-four then, quite a man, and doing wonderfully, according to his account,—more moderately, in my opinion. I wondered what had brought him. He soon told me.

"Sister Anne," he said, when our first greeting was over, "Monsieur Thomas has turned up. He has been heard of in Algeria."

Monsieur Thomas was the gentleman who owed us forty thousand pounds. I shook my head rather doubtfully.

"There are so many Thomases all over the world," said I.

"Oh, but this is the one," eagerly replied William; "and he is quite a rich man, and can pay us principal and interest, you know, and we can get back the old house, and live in it, and bid a last good-bye to Rosebower."

"My dear William, do not be too hopeful. Depend upon it this Thomas is not the right one, or if he is, he will never pay us."

"*You* are a Thomas of Didymus, Sister Anne. I tell you this is the man." And he proceeded to give me proofs which convinced me.

Yes, this Thomas was our Thomas, but my older knowledge of the world would not allow me now the illusions I had formerly indulged in. William got vexed with my scepticism, and said, rather warmly:

"I tell you he shall pay us, and, what is more, I shall be off to Algiers next week."

"My dear boy, you do not mean it!"

But he did mean it, and meant it very seriously too. Now, I knew this was ruin. To leave his work when he was just beginning to be known in it was ruin, and I tried to impress this truth upon him, in vain. The forty thousand pounds dazzled him, and for that ignis fatuus he was willing to forego the steady flow of his little prosperity at home. I took a desperate resolve.

"I shall go to Algiers," I said, "and so you will run no risk of loss, and be no worse off if the money cannot be recovered."

William's face fell. I suspect the pleasure of seeing Africa, palm-trees, and turbaned Arabs had had something to do with his eagerness to hunt down Monsieur Thomas. But my proposal was so reasonable, that he did not dare to resist it; he raised, indeed, a few objections, which I promptly overruled, and my journey was decided.

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

SECOND NARRATIVE.

THE NARRATIVE OF MR. BRUFF.

CHAPTER III.

THE prominent personage among the guests at the dinner party I found to be Mr. Murthwaite.

On his appearance in England, after his wanderings, society had been greatly interested in the traveller, as a man who had passed through many dangerous adventures, and who had escaped to tell the tale. He had now announced his intention of returning to the scene of his exploits, and of penetrating into regions left still unexplored. This magnificent indifference to presuming on his luck, and to placing his safety in peril for the second time, revived the flagging interest of the worshippers in the hero. The law of chances was clearly against his escaping on this occasion. It is not every day that we can meet an eminent person at dinner, and feel that there is a reasonable prospect of the news of his murder being the news that we hear of him next.

When the gentlemen were left by themselves in the dining-room, I found myself sitting next to Mr. Murthwaite. The guests present being all English, it is needless to say that, as soon as the wholesome check exercised by the presence of the ladies was removed, the conversation turned on politics as a necessary result.

In respect to this all-absorbing national topic, I happen to be one of the most un-English Englishmen living. As a general rule, political talk appears to me to be of all talk the most dreary and the most profitless. Glancing at Mr. Murthwaite, when the bottles had made their first round of the table, I found that he was apparently of my way of thinking. He was doing it very dexterously—with all possible consideration for the feelings of his host—but it is not the less certain that he was composing himself for a nap. It struck me as an experiment worth attempting, to try whether a judicious allusion to the subject of the Moonstone would keep him awake, and, if it did, to see what *he* thought of the last new complication in the Indian conspiracy, as revealed in the prosaic precincts of my office.

"If I am not mistaken, Mr. Murthwaite," I began, "you were acquainted with the late Lady Verinder, and you took some interest in the strange succession of events which ended in the loss of the Moonstone?"

The eminent traveller did me the honour of waking up in an instant, and asking me who I was.

I informed him of my professional connexion with the Herncastle family, not forgetting the curious position which I had occupied towards the Colonel and his Diamond in the bygone time.

Mr. Murthwaite shifted round in his chair, so as to put the rest of the company behind him (Conservatives and Liberals alike), and concentrated his whole attention on plain Mr. Bruff, of Gray's Inn Square.

"Have you heard anything, lately, of the Indians?" he asked.

"I have every reason to believe," I answered, "that one of them had an interview with me, in my office, yesterday."

Mr. Murthwaite was not an easy man to astonish; but that last answer of mine completely staggered him. I described what had happened to Mr. Luker, and what had happened to myself, exactly as I have described it here. "It is clear that the Indian's parting inquiry had an object," I added. "Why should he be so anxious to know the time at which a borrower of money is usually privileged to pay the money back?"

"Is it possible that you don't see his motive, Mr. Bruff?"

"I am ashamed of my stupidity, Mr. Murthwaite—but I certainly don't see it."

The great traveller became quite interested in sounding the immense vacuity of my dulness to its lowest depths.

"Let me ask you one question," he said. "In what position does the conspiracy to seize the Moonstone now stand?"

"I can't say," I answered. "The Indian plot is a mystery to me."

"The Indian plot, Mr. Bruff, can only be a mystery to you, because you have never seriously examined it. Shall we run it over together, from the time when you drew Colonel Herncastle's Will, to the time when the Indian called

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at your office? In your position, it may be of very serious importance to the interests of Miss Verinder, that you should be able to take a clear view of this matter in case of need. Tell me, bearing that in mind, whether you will penetrate the Indian's motive for yourself? or whether you wish me to save you the trouble of making any inquiry into it?"

It is needless to say that I thoroughly appreciated the practical purpose which I now saw that he had in view, and that the first of the two alternatives was the alternative I chose.

"Very good," said Mr. Murthwaite. "We will take the question of the ages of the three Indians first. I can testify that they all look much about the same age—and you can decide for yourself, whether the man whom you saw was, or was not, in the prime of life. Not forty, you think? My idea too. We will say not forty. Now look back to the time when Colonel Herncastle came to England, and when you were concerned in the plan he adopted to preserve his life. I don't want you to count the years. I will only say, it is clear that these present Indians, at their age, must be the successors of three other Indians (high caste Brahmins all of them, Mr. Bruff, when they left their native country!) who followed the Colonel to these shores. Very well. These present men of ours have succeeded to the men who were here before them. If they had only done that, the matter would not have been worth inquiring into. But they have done more. They have succeeded to the organisation which their predecessors established in this country. Don't start! The organisation is a very trumpery affair, according to our ideas, I have no doubt. I should reckon it up as including the command of money; the services, when needed, of that shady sort of Englishman, who lives in the byeways of foreign life in London; and, lastly, the secret sympathy of such few men of their own country and (formerly, at least) of their own religion, as happen to be employed in ministering to some of the multitudinous wants of this great city. Nothing very formidable, as you see! But worth notice at starting, because we *may* find occasion to refer to this modest little Indian organisation as we go on. Having now cleared the ground, I am going to ask you a question; and I expect your experience to answer it. What was the event which gave the Indians their first chance of seizing the Diamond?"

I understood the allusion to my experience.

"The first chance they got," I replied, "was clearly offered to them by Colonel Herncastle's death. They would be aware of his death, I suppose, as a matter of course?"

"As a matter of course. And his death, as you say, gave them their first chance. Up to that time the Moonstone was safe in the strong room of the bank. You drew the Colonel's Will leaving his jewel to his niece; and the Will was proved in the usual way. As a lawyer, you can be at no loss to know what course the Indians would take (under English advice) after *that*."

"They would provide themselves with a copy of the Will from Doctors' Commons," I said.

"Exactly. One or other of those shady Englishmen to whom I have alluded, would get them the copy you have described. That copy would inform them that the Moonstone was bequeathed to the daughter of Lady Verinder, and that Mr. Blake the elder, or some person appointed by him, was to place it in her hands. You will agree with me that the necessary information about persons in the position of Lady Verinder and Mr. Blake, would be perfectly easy information to obtain. The one difficulty for the Indians would be to decide, whether they should make their attempt on the Diamond when it was in course of removal from the keeping of the bank, or whether they should wait until it was taken down to Yorkshire to Lady Verinder's house. The second way would be manifestly the safest way—and there you have the explanation of the appearance of the Indians at Frizinghall, disguised as jugglers, and waiting their time. In London, it is needless to say, they had their organisation at their disposal to keep them informed of events. Two men would do it. One to follow anybody who went from Mr. Blake's house to the bank. And one to treat the lower men-servants with beer, and to hear the news of the house. These common-place precautions would readily inform them that Mr. Franklin Blake had been to the bank, and that Mr. Franklin Blake was the only person in the house who was going to visit Lady Verinder. What actually followed upon that discovery, you remember, no doubt, quite as correctly as I do."

I remembered that Franklin Blake had detected one of the spies, in the street—that he had, in consequence, advanced the time of his arrival in Yorkshire by some hours—and that (thanks to old Betteredge's excellent advice) he had lodged the Diamond in the bank at Frizinghall, before the Indians were so much as prepared to see him in the neighbourhood. All perfectly clear so far. But, the Indians being ignorant of the precaution thus taken, how was it that they had made no attempt on Lady Verinder's house (in which they must have supposed the Diamond to be) through the whole of the interval that elapsed before Rachel's birthday?

In putting this difficulty to Mr. Murthwaite, I thought it right to add that I had heard of the little boy, and the drop of ink, and the rest of it, and that any explanation based on the theory of clairvoyance was an explanation which would carry no conviction whatever with it, to my mind.

"Nor to mine either," said Mr. Murthwaite. "The clairvoyance in this case is simply a development of the romantic side of the Indian character. It would be a refreshment and an encouragement to those men—quite inconceivable, I grant you, to the English mind—to surround their wearisome and perilous errand in this country with a certain halo of the marvellous and the supernatural. Their boy is

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unquestionably a sensitive subject to the mesmeric influence—and, under that influence, he has no doubt reflected what was already in the mind of the person mesmerising him. I have tested the theory of clairvoyance—and I have never found the manifestations get beyond that point. The Indians don't investigate the matter in this way; the Indians look upon their boy as a Seer of things invisible to their eyes—and, I repeat, in that marvel they find the source of a new interest in the purpose that unites them. I only notice this as offering a curious view of human character, which must be quite new to you. We have nothing whatever to do with clairvoyance, or with mesmerism, or with anything else that is hard of belief to a practical man, in the inquiry that we are now pursuing. My object in following the Indian plot, step by step, is to trace results back, by rational means, to natural causes. Have I succeeded to your satisfaction, so far?"

"Not a doubt of it, Mr. Murthwaite! I am waiting, however, with some anxiety, to hear the rational explanation of the difficulty which I have just had the honour of submitting to you."

Mr. Murthwaite smiled. "It's the easiest difficulty to deal with of all," he said. "Permit me to begin by admitting your statement of the case as a perfectly correct one. The Indians were undoubtedly not aware of what Mr. Franklin Blake had done with the Diamond—for we find them making their first mistake, on the first night of Mr. Blake's arrival at his aunt's house."

"Their first mistake?" I repeated.

"Certainly! The mistake of allowing themselves to be surprised, lurking about the terrace at night, by Gabriel Betteredge. However, they had the merit of seeing for themselves that they had taken a false step—for, as you say, again, with plenty of time at their disposal, they never came near the house for weeks afterwards."

"Why, Mr. Murthwaite? That's what I want to know! Why?"

"Because no Indian, Mr. Bruff, ever runs an unnecessary risk. The clause you drew in Colonel Herncastle's Will, informed them (didn't it?) that the Moonstone was to pass absolutely into Miss Verinder's possession on her birthday. Very well. Tell me which was the safest course for men in their position? To make their attempt on the Diamond while it was under the control of Mr. Franklin Blake, who had shown already that he could suspect and outwit them? Or to wait till the Diamond was at the disposal of a young girl, who would innocently delight in wearing the magnificent jewel at every possible opportunity? Perhaps you want a proof that my theory is correct? Take the conduct of the Indians themselves as the proof. They appeared at the house, after waiting all those weeks, on Miss Verinder's birthday; and they were rewarded for the patient accuracy of their calculations by seeing the Moonstone in the bosom of her dress! When I heard the story of the Colonel and the Diamond, later in the evening, I felt so sure about the risk Mr. Franklin Blake had run (they would have certainly attacked him, if he had not happened to ride back to Lady Verinder's in the company of other people); and I was so strongly convinced of the worse risks still, in store for Miss Verinder, that I recommended following the Colonel's plan, and destroying the identity of the gem by having it cut into separate stones. How its extraordinary disappearance, that night, made my advice useless, and utterly defeated the Hindoo plot—and how all further action on the part of the Indians was paralysed the next day by their confinement in prison as rogues and vagabonds—you know as well as I do. The first act in the conspiracy closes there. Before we go on to the second, may I ask whether I have met your difficulty, with an explanation which is satisfactory to the mind of a practical man?"

It was impossible to deny that he had met my difficulty fairly; thanks to his superior knowledge of the Indian character—and thanks to his not having had hundreds of other Wills to think of since Colonel Herncastle's time!

"So far, so good," resumed Mr. Murthwaite. "The first chance the Indians had of seizing the Diamond was a chance lost, on the day when they were committed to the prison at Frizinghall. When did the second chance offer itself? The second chance offered itself—as I am in a condition to prove—while they were still in confinement."

He took out his pocket-book, and opened it at a particular leaf, before he went on.

"I was staying," he resumed, "with some friends at Frizinghall, at the time. A day or two before the Indians were set free (on a Monday, I think), the governor of the prison came to me with a letter. It had been left for the Indians by one Mrs. Macann, of whom they had hired the lodging in which they lived; and it had been delivered at Mrs. Macann's door, in ordinary course of post, on the previous morning. The prison authorities had noticed that the post-mark was 'Lambeth,' and that the address on the outside, though expressed in correct English, was, in form, oddly at variance with the customary method of directing a letter. On opening it, they had found the contents to be written in a foreign language, which they rightly guessed at as Hindustani. Their object in coming to me was, of course, to have the letter translated to them. I took a copy in my pocket-book of the original, and of my translation—and there they are at your service."

He handed me the open pocket-book. The address on the letter was the first thing copied. It was all written in one paragraph, without any attempt at punctuation, thus: "To the three Indian men living with the lady called Macann at Frizinghall in Yorkshire." The Hindoo characters followed; and the English translation appeared at the end, expressed in these mysterious words:

"In the name of the Regent of the Night,

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whose seat is on the Antelope, whose arms embrace the four corners of the earth.

"Brothers, turn your faces to the south, and come to me in the street of many noises, which leads down to the muddy river.

"The reason is this.

"My own eyes have seen it."

There the letter ended, without either date or signature. I handed it back to Mr. Murthwaite, and owned that this curious specimen of Hindoo correspondence rather puzzled me.

"I can explain the first sentence to you," he said; "and the conduct of the Indians themselves will explain the rest. The god of the moon is represented, in the Hindoo mythology, as a four-armed deity, seated on an antelope; and one of his titles is the regent of the night. Here, then, to begin with, is something which looks suspiciously like an indirect reference to the Moonstone. Now, let us see what the Indians did, after the prison authorities had allowed them to receive their letter. On the very day when they were set free they went at once to the railway station, and took their places in the first train that started for London. We all thought it a pity at Frizinghall that their proceedings were not privately watched. But, after Lady Verinder had dismissed the police officer, and had stopped all further inquiry into the loss of the Diamond, no one else could presume to stir in the matter. The Indians were free to go to London, and to London they went. What was the next news we heard of them, Mr. Bruff?"

"They were annoying Mr. Luker," I answered, "by loitering about his house at Lambeth."

"Did you read the report of Mr. Luker's application to the magistrate?"

"Yes."

"In the course of his statement he referred, if you remember, to a foreign workman in his employment, whom he had just dismissed on suspicion of attempted theft, and whom he also distrusted as possibly acting in collusion with the Indians who had annoyed him. The inference is pretty plain, Mr. Bruff, as to who wrote that letter which puzzled you just now, and as to which of Mr. Luker's Oriental treasures the workman had attempted to steal."

The inference (as I hastened to acknowledge) was too plain to need being pointed out. I had never doubted that the Moonstone had found its way into Mr. Luker's hands, at the time to which Mr. Murthwaite alluded. My only question had been, How had the Indians discovered the circumstance? This question (the most difficult to deal with of all, as I had thought) had now received its answer, like the rest. Lawyer as I was, I began to feel that I might trust Mr. Murthwaite to lead me blindfold through the last windings of the labyrinth, along which he had guided me thus far. I paid him the compliment of telling him this, and found my little concession very graciously received.

"You shall give me a piece of information in your turn before we go on," he said. "Somebody must have taken the Moonstone from Yorkshire to London. And somebody must have raised money on it, or it would never have been in Mr. Luker's possession. Has there been any discovery made of who that person was?"

"None that I know of."

"There was a story (was there not?) about Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite. I am told he is an eminent philanthropist—which is decidedly against him, to begin with."

I heartily agreed in this with Mr. Murthwaite. At the same time, I felt bound to inform him (without, it is needless to say, mentioning Miss Verinder's name) that Mr. Godfrey Ablewhite had been cleared of all suspicion, on evidence which I could answer for as entirely beyond dispute.

"Very well," said Mr. Murthwaite, quietly, "let us leave it to time to clear the matter up. In the meanwhile, Mr. Bruff, we must get back again to the Indians, on your account. Their journey to London simply ended in their becoming the victims of another defeat. The loss of their second chance of seizing the Diamond is mainly attributable, as I think, to the cunning and foresight of Mr. Luker—who doesn't stand at the top of the prosperous and ancient profession of usury for nothing! By the prompt dismissal of the man in his employment, he deprived the Indians of the assistance which their confederate would have rendered them in getting into the house. By the prompt transport of the Moonstone to his banker's, he took the conspirators by surprise before they were prepared with a new plan for robbing him. How the Indians, in this latter case, suspected what he had done, and how they contrived to possess themselves of his banker's receipt, are events too recent to need dwelling on. Let it be enough to say that they know the Moonstone to be once more out of their reach; deposited (under the general description of 'a valuable gem') in a banker's strong room. Now, Mr. Bruff, what is their third chance of seizing the Diamond? and when will it come?"

As the question passed his lips, I penetrated the motive of the Indian's visit to my office at last!

"I see it!" I exclaimed. "The Indians take it for granted, as we do, that the Moonstone has been pledged; and they want to be certainly informed of the earliest period at which the pledge can be redeemed—because that will be the earliest period at which the Diamond can be removed from the safe keeping of the bank!"

"I told you you would find it out for yourself, Mr. Bruff, if I only gave you a fair chance. In a year from the time when the Moonstone was pledged, the Indians will be on the watch for their third chance. Mr. Luker's own lips have told them how long they will have to wait, and your respectable authority has satisfied them that Mr. Luker has spoken the truth. When do we suppose, at a rough guess, that

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the Diamond found its way into the money-lender's hands?"

"Towards the end of last June," I answered, "as well as I can reckon it."

"And we are now in the year 'forty-eight. Very good. If the unknown person who has pledged the Moonstone can redeem it in a year, the jewel will be in that person's possession again at the end of June, 'forty-nine. I shall be thousands of miles away from England and English news at that date. But it may be worth *your* while to take a note of it, and to arrange to be in London at the time."

"You think something serious will happen?" I said.

"I think I shall be safer," he answered, "among the fiercest fanatics of Central Asia than I should be if I crossed the door of the bank with the Moonstone in my pocket. The Indians have been defeated twice running, Mr. Bruff. It's my firm belief that they won't be defeated a third time."

Those were the last words he said on the subject. The coffee came in; the guests rose, and dispersed themselves about the room; and we joined the ladies of the dinner-party up-stairs.

I made a note of the date, and it may not be amiss if I close my narrative by repeating that note here:

June, 'forty-nine. Expect news of the Indians, towards the end of the month.

And that done, I hand the pen, which I have now no further claim to use, to the writer who follows me next.

Third Narrative.

Contributed by Franklin Blake.

CHAPTER I.

In the spring of the year eighteen hundred and forty-nine I was wandering in the East, and had then recently altered the travelling plans which I had laid out some months before, and which I had communicated to my lawyer and my banker in London.

This change made it necessary for me to send one of my servants to obtain my letters and remittances from the English consul in a certain city, which was no longer included as one of my resting places in my new travelling scheme. The man was to join me again at an appointed place and time. An accident, for which he was not responsible, delayed him on his errand. For a week I and my people waited, encamped on the borders of a desert. At the end of that time the missing man made his appearance, with the money and the letters, at the entrance of my tent.

"I am afraid I bring you bad news, sir," he said, and pointed to one of the letters, which had a mourning border round it, and the address on which was in the handwriting of Mr. Bruff.

I know nothing, in a case of this kind, so unendurable as suspense. The letter with the mourning border was the letter that I opened first.

It informed me that my father was dead, and that I was heir to his great fortune. The wealth which had thus fallen into my hands brought its responsibilities with it; and Mr. Bruff entreated me to lose no time in returning to England.

By daybreak the next morning I was on my way back to my own country.

The picture presented of me, by my old friend Betteredge, at the time of my departure from England, is (as I think) a little overdrawn. He has, in his own quaint way, interpreted seriously one of his young mistress's many satirical references to my foreign education; and has persuaded himself that he actually saw those French, German, and Italian sides to my character, which my lively cousin only professed to discover in jest, and which never had any real existence, except in our good Betteredge's own brain. But, barring this drawback, I am bound to own that he has stated no more than the truth in representing me as wounded to the heart by Rachel's treatment, and as leaving England in the first keenness of suffering caused by the bitterest disappointment of my life.

I went abroad, resolved—if change and absence could help me—to forget her. It is, I am persuaded, no true view of human nature which denies that change and absence *do* help a man under these circumstances: they force his attention away from the exclusive contemplation of his own sorrow. I never forgot her; but the pang of remembrance lost its worst bitterness, little by little, as time, distance, and novelty interposed themselves more and more effectually between Rachel and me.

On the other hand, it is no less certain that, with the act of turning homeward, the remedy which had gained its ground so steadily, began now, just as steadily, to drop back. The nearer I drew to the country which she inhabited, and to the prospect of seeing her again, the more irresistibly her influence began to recover its hold on me. On leaving England, she was the last person in the world, whose name I would have suffered to pass my lips. On returning to England, she was the first person I inquired after, when Mr. Bruff and I met again.

I was informed, of course, of all that had happened in my absence: in other words, of all that has been related here in continuation of Betteredge's narrative—one circumstance only being excepted. Mr. Bruff did not, at that time, feel himself at liberty to inform me of the motives which had privately influenced Rachel, and Godfrey Ablewhite, in recalling the marriage promise, on either side. I troubled him with no embarrassing questions on this delicate subject. It was relief enough to me, after the jealous disappointment caused by hearing that she had ever contemplated being Godfrey's wife, to know that reflection had convicted her of acting rashly, and that she had effected her own release from her marriage engagement.

Having heard the story of the past, my next inquiries (still inquiries after Rachel!) advanced

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naturally to the present time. Under whose care had she been placed after leaving Mr. Bruff's house? and where was she living now?

She was living under the care of a widowed sister of the late Sir John Verinder—one Mrs. Merridew—whom her mother's executors had requested to act as guardian, and who had accepted the proposal. They were reported to me, as getting on together admirably well, and as being now established, for the season, in Mrs. Merridew's house in Portland Place.

Half an hour after receiving this information, I was on my way to Portland Place—without having had the courage to own it to Mr. Bruff!

The man who answered the door was not sure whether Miss Verinder was at home or not. I sent him up-stairs with my card, as the speediest way of setting the question at rest. The man came down again with an impenetrable face, and informed me that Miss Verinder was out.

I might have suspected other people of purposely denying themselves to me. But it was impossible to suspect Rachel. I left word that I would call again at six o'clock that evening.

At six o'clock, I was informed for the second time that Miss Verinder was not at home. Had any message been left for me? No message had been left for me. Had Miss Verinder not received my card? The servant begged my pardon—Miss Verinder *had* received it.

The inference was too plain to be resisted. Rachel declined to see me.

On my side, I declined to be treated in this way, without making an attempt, at least, to discover a reason for it. I sent up my name to Mrs. Merridew, and requested her to favour me with a personal interview at any hour which it might be most convenient to her to name.

Mrs. Merridew made no difficulty about receiving me at once. I was shown into a comfortable little sitting-room, and found myself in the presence of a comfortable little elderly lady. She was so good as to feel great regret and much surprise, entirely on my account. She was at the same time, however, not in a position to offer me any explanation, or to press Rachel on a matter which appeared to relate to a question of private feeling alone. This was said over and over again, with a polite patience that nothing could tire; and this was all I gained by applying to Mrs. Merridew.

My last chance was to write to Rachel. My servant took a letter to her the next day, with strict instructions to wait for an answer.

The answer came back, literally in one sentence.

"Miss Verinder begs to decline entering into any correspondence with Mr. Franklin Blake."

Fond as I was of her, I felt indignantly the insult offered to me in that reply. Mr. Bruff came in to speak to me on business, before I had recovered possession of myself. I dismissed the business on the spot, and laid the whole case before him. He proved to be as incapable of enlightening me as Mrs. Merridew herself. I asked him if any slander had been spoken of me in Rachel's hearing. Mr. Bruff was not aware of any slander of which I was the object. Had she referred to me in any way, while she was staying under Mr. Bruff's roof? Never. Had she not so much as asked, during all my long absence, whether I was living or dead? No such question had ever passed her lips.

I took out of my pocket-book the letter which poor Lady Verinder had written to me from Frizinghall, on the day when I left her house in Yorkshire. And I pointed Mr. Bruff's attention to these two sentences in it:

"The valuable assistance which you rendered to the inquiry after the lost jewel is still an unpardoned offence, in the present dreadful state of Rachel's mind. Moving blindfold in this matter, you have added to the burden of anxiety which she has had to bear, by innocently threatening her secret with discovery through your exertions."

"Is it possible," I asked, "that the feeling towards me which is there described, is as bitter as ever against me now?"

Mr. Bruff looked unaffectedly distressed.

"If you insist on an answer," he said, "I own I can place no other interpretation on her conduct than that."

I rang the bell, and directed my servant to pack my portmanteau, and to send out for a railway guide. Mr. Bruff asked, in astonishment, what I was going to do.

"I am going to Yorkshire," I answered, "by the next train."

"May I ask for what purpose?"

"Mr. Bruff, the assistance I innocently rendered to the inquiry after the Diamond was an unpardoned offence, in Rachel's mind, nearly a year since; and it remains an unpardoned offence still. I won't accept that position! I am determined to find out the secret of her silence towards her mother, and her enmity towards *me*. If time, pains, and money can do it, I will lay my hand on the thief who took the Moonstone!"

The worthy old gentleman attempted to remonstrate—to induce me to listen to reason—to do his duty towards me, in short. I was deaf to everything that he could urge. No earthly consideration would, at that moment, have shaken the resolution that was in me.

"I shall take up the inquiry again," I went on, "at the point where I dropped it; and I shall follow it onwards, step by step, till I come to the present time. There are missing links in the evidence, as *I* left it, which Gabriel Betteredge can supply. And to Gabriel Betteredge I go!"

Towards sunset, that evening, I stood again on the well-remembered terrace, and looked once more at the peaceful old country house. The gardener was the first person whom I saw in the deserted grounds. He had left Betteredge, an hour since, sunning himself in the customary corner of the back yard. I knew it well; and I said I would go and seek him myself.

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I walked round by the familiar paths and passages, and looked in at the open gate of the yard.

There he was—the dear old friend of the happy days that were never to come again—there he was in the old corner, on the old bee-hive chair, with his pipe in his mouth, and his Robinson Crusoe on his lap, and his two friends, the dogs, dozing on either side of him! In the position in which I stood, my shadow was projected in front of me by the last slanting rays of the sun. Either the dogs saw it, or their keen scent informed them of my approach. They started up with a growl. Starting in his turn, the old man quieted them by a word, and then shaded his failing eyes with his hand, and looked inquiringly at the figure at the gate.

My own eyes were full of tears. I was obliged to wait for a moment before I could trust myself to speak to him.

KNOTS.

Knots are of great antiquity, perhaps as old as human fingers; in proof, may be adduced the mystery attached to, and the traditions connected with, several knots. They formed part of the sorcerer's stock in trade, as they have recently formed part of the spirit-juggler's. The Lapland witches sold winds, in the shape of knots on a rope; the purchaser untied the knot corresponding to the wind he wanted. The true-lover's knot, Sir Thomas Browne tells us, "had, perhaps, its original from the nodus Herculaneus, or that which was called Hercules his knot [very tight and esteemed sacred], resembling the snaky complication in the caduceus or rod of Hermes." The Gordian knot, which we should much like to see, is another ancient celebrity. Gordius, be it remembered, was a Phrygian husbandman promoted to a kingdom by the oracle of Apollo. In memory whereof, he hung up his plough-traces as a votive offering in the temple of Jupiter. One rope of those traces he tied with so cunning a knot, that it was foretold that whoever loosed it should be king of all Asia. Alexander the Great, because he could not untie it, cut it with his sword.

Instead of the maxim "Est modus in rebus," we might often say, "Est nodus in rebus," to indicate that the "res" are knotty affairs—which need not be adverse or unpleasant. A knot of dear friends is delightful company. Knotted wood is sought out for cabinetwork and inlaying. The moon's nodes or knots in her orbit are got over by our satellite without much difficulty. However perplexing the plot of a drama may be, we are satisfied if the dénouement, or unknotting, be good. There is a little marsh-bird, the knot (a favourite dish with King Canutus, from whom it takes its specific Latin name), which is so excellent to eat, that Ben Jonson includes "knots and stints" in his list of delicacies. The more knots an hour a ship can make, the better the passengers will like it. Many a pair of lovers would willingly tie with their tongues a knot which they cannot untie with their teeth. A "quipos" or Peruvian letter, composed of knots made on a number of diversely coloured strings, may often have conveyed good news. Still, there are knots sinister as well as knots propitious. If there exist a true-lovers' knot, there is also a knot to hinder love—namely the magical nœud d'aiguillette, performed in several ugly fashions. The antidote is to wear a ring in which the right eye of a weasel is set. Knot-grass, with its minute and pretty flowers, is believed to have the effect of stunting and dwarfing the growth of children and animals to whom it is administered.

Knots are a study in themselves, an art, an accomplishment. They may be considered historically, biographically, technically, and metaphorically.

What was the subtle knot with which Samson tied the foxes' tails together in pairs, with a firebrand between them? Himself, the men of Judah bound with two new cords; but how? The middle-age jailors and executioners must have had their knots of considerable efficiency; as when a culprit, or feudal rival, was tied to four horses, and so torn in quarters by their pulling in opposite directions. How was Mazeppa bound to his steed? There are real knots and make-believe knots. The officials who transferred convicts from prison to the galleys, as well as those who kept and managed them in the various bagnes of Europe, must have had some slight knowledge of knots. Nor were the "two nautical gentlemen," who shut up the Davenports, bad scholars in this branch of art.

That wrinkle, as recorded by Mr. Galton, deserves to be set forth here. It hangs on the fact that an active man, whose hands and feet are small, can be but imperfectly secured by ligatures, unless the cord or whatever else you use has been thoroughly well stretched. Many people have exhibited themselves for money, who have allowed themselves to be tied hand and foot and then put in a sack, whence they have emerged in a few minutes, with the cords in a neat coil in their hands. The brothers Davenport possessed this skill, but they knew better than to show themselves for pence at country fairs. By implying that they were released by supernatural agency, they held fashionable and profitable séances in London. The two exhibitors were tied, face to face in a cupboard, respectively by two persons selected by the audience, and who inspected one another's knots as well as they could. On their expressing themselves satisfied, the cupboard was closed and the lights in the room were kept low for five or ten minutes, until a signal was made by the confined performers. Then, in a blaze of gaslight, the doors were opened from within, and out walked the two men, leaving the rope behind them.

At length two nautical gentlemen insisted on using their own cord, which they had previously well stretched. This proceeding baffled the Davenports. Thenceforward, wherever they

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showed themselves, the nautical gentlemen also appeared, appealing to the audience to elect them to tie the exhibitors' hands. In this way, they exposed the supernatural pretensions and fairly drove them out of England. The skill of the brothers was praiseworthy, but their imposture was unbearable.

On one occasion, Mr. Galton was proposed by an audience to tie their hands. He did his best, and also scrutinised his colleague's knot, as well as the dark and confined space in which the exhibitors were tied, permitted. The cord was, perhaps, a little too thick, but it was supple and strong; and Mr. Galton was greatly surprised at the ease with which the brothers disembarrassed themselves. They were not more than ten minutes in getting free. Of course, if either of the exhibitors could struggle loose, he would assist his colleague. It was an ingenious idea, too, to have two persons, and not one person, to tie them. It was improbable that a person, taken at hap-hazard, should be capable of tying his man securely; it was doubly improbable that two persons so taken should both be capable. If it were twenty to one against any one person's having sufficient skill, it was twenty times twenty, or four hundred to one, against both the persons selected to tie the Davenports being able to do so effectively.

To tie a man's hands behind his back, Mr. Galton assures us a handkerchief is the best thing; failing that, take a thin cord. It is necessary that its length be not less than two feet, but two feet six inches is the proper length. For a *double* tie, it should be three feet six inches. If you are quick in tying the common "tom-fool's knot," known to every sailor, it is the best for the purpose. Put the prisoner's hands one within each loop, then draw tightly the running ends, and knot them together. To secure a prisoner with the least amount of string, place his hands back to back, behind him, then tie the thumbs together, and also the little fingers. Two bits of thin string, each a foot long, will do this thoroughly.

Technically, there is the seamstress's knot, for retaining the end of the thread in her work; there is likewise the weaver's knot, for renewing the continuity of a broken warp. There are packers' knots, hangmen's knots, guillotinemen's knots, (for the previous "toilette"), slave-drivers' knots, cat-o'nine-tails-men's knots; while sailors are universally and altogether men of knots.

Many stitches are incipient knots; as chain-stitch, lock-stitch, herring-bone-stitch, and the rest. They really go with the knots that bind various materials together. On the other hand, netting, knitting, and crochet work, are knots that cause a single thread to weave itself into a tissue. This part of the subject naturally branches into braids. Whether it be a whipthong composed of several strands, or of only a single strip or cord contorted and involved with its own proper self; whether it be a horse's mane or tail plaited with straw to appear at a fair, or a lady's back hair or chignon braided, with or without ribbons, out of three, four, or more separate tresses; it cannot escape from its close relationship to knots.

Metaphorically, a river can tie a knot, however hard the feat might be to accomplish literally;

> Though Fate had fast bound her,
> With Styx nine times round her,
> Yet music and love were victorious.

Music, it appears, can do the reverse;

> In notes with many a winding bout
> Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
> With wanton head, and giddy cunning,
> The melting voice through mazes running,
> Untwisting all the chains that tie
> The hidden soul of harmony.

At the Conservatoire des Arts et Métiers in Paris, are numerous examples of knots, arranged in the order of their intricacy. Mr. Galton's excellent Art of Travel, from which we have already quoted, gives not a few. There you find represented the three elementary knots which every one should know; namely, the timber-hitch, the bowline, and the clove-hitch. At page 51 are mountaineering knots. Of one, No. 4, a diagram is given, *in order that no one may imitate it*, as it belongs to the family of knots which most weaken a rope. Its nearest neighbour for mischief is the common single knot, of which no diagram is needed. For the simple and serviceable Malay-hitch, and for the Norwegian mode of tying a parcel on your back like a knapsack, we refer the reader to Mr. Galton's instructive and amusing book.

But scattered hints and partial information will not suffice for the British public. It is an honourable characteristic of our literature that it contains numerous admirable and complete treatises on many special subjects. Mr. Robert Hardwicke, publisher of many pleasant and useful works, has sent forth a Book of Knots, by Tom Bowling, illustrated with one hundred and seventy-two diagrams, showing the manner of making every knot, tie, and splice, for the moderate price of half-a-crown, or nearly six knots a penny. It proves the feasibility of the old Peruvian knot-writing. If with an alphabet of six-and-twenty letters we can convey intelligence to the full extent of our need, it would be odd if we could not do so, though not in quite so portable a form, with one hundred and seventy-two knots.

ENGLISH EYES ON FRENCH WORK.

Last year the council of the Society of Arts determined that a certain number of skilled artisans should be sent over to Paris to study the productions of their various trades in the Exposition there. The committee of Council on Education offered the society five hundred pounds for the purpose, provided an equal sum was raised by voluntary contribution. What was raised was exactly sixpence under a thousand and forty pounds; which enabled about eighty

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workmen to visit the Exposition and to write reports on what they saw. The men were accredited to M. Haussoullier, who had been appointed by the commissioners to the charge of the British workman's hall in the Exhibition building; and M. Fouché, an artisan member of the Conseil des Prud'hommes, attended them as guide and interpreter. The Society of Arts have published their reports in one thick volume; and a most interesting volume it is; showing what impression French life, French manners, and French industries made on the unadulterated British intellect, and how far the insular workman considered himself inferior or superior to his continental rival.

The reports are also interesting as a study of character in their various treatment of the subject in hand. Some are pictorial, taking in the outside aspect of things, and detailing personal doings and adventures; others are technical, dealing only with the method of the special manufacture; some are critical; others are statistical; some show that the authors thought more of themselves and how they were doing their work, rather than of the work itself, and others show exactly the reverse. Some, again, are enthusiastic about everything. The charm and spell of novelty was on their writers. The pretty, odd, theatrical life of Paris when seen for the first time, the white caps of the women, the blue blouses of the working men, the clear air and absence of "blacks," the pleasantly showy cafés in place of our hideously brilliant gin-shops, the outward gaiety and good temper and courteous little forms of politeness, the individual freedom mixed with that peculiar public discipline which at first sight seems the very ideal of good government—all was as delightful to certain of the more genial sort as it was to us when we first went over; and it takes us back to the freshness of our own early pleasure in French life to read the boyish delight of some among them. But all were not equally charmed. Some disliked the Sunday gaiety; others disliked so much gaiety generally, and thought the men frivolous and childish who could find amusement in puerile pleasures; others, again, contrasted the orderliness and innocence of the French fêtes with the brutal sottishness of London junketings, and gave the palm to the Gaul. All liked the Conseil des Prud'hommes; all liked the liberal opening of the museums, &c., to the working classes, and the care taken of the workman's education; some liked the mode of life, the brightness and movement of the Boulevards, and the family gatherings in the open air; others thought there was no family life in the nation—taking home to mean the four walls which enclose one's pots and pans. "From what I saw of the French nation," says one, with a grave oddness of phrase very expressive, "I consider that their mode of life is peculiarly foreign to the English mind. They appear remarkably fond of imbibing their favourite wines while exposing themselves to the public gaze." All liked the clean and tidy look of the working women, and compared it with the dragging trains and second-hand finery of their own wives and daughters. The short dress carried it invariably over the limp long petticoat; and the white cap carried it over the dirty, battered, and tawdry bonnet. All the men were pleasantly impressed by the self-respect, the order, the equality, of the workshops; to find the men and foremen alike in the blouse, with no difference of costume to mark the minute differences in grade to which we attach so much importance, but all content to appear of the "wages class."

The most enthusiastic admirer of French ways and modes is the writer who leads off the rest—Mr. Hooper, a cabinet-maker—and his paper is certainly the most graphic and pictorial. It is a charming sketch, and would do honour to a practised hand; yet Mr. Hooper says of himself that this was the first fortnight's holiday he had ever had, and that he "had known little else than toil from his boyhood, working at a bench not less than ten hours per day in a dismal, dirty, unhealthy workshop": — not exactly the kind of life for acquiring a good method either of observation or narration. But if his paper stand out as the most observant and pictorial, there are others which are as thoughtful, and of even a more refined tone of criticism. "The art of wood-carving," says Mr. Baker, "may be said to begin at the rudest notching and terminate in the noblest thoughts, expressed in the most beautiful forms." Mr. Wilson, a cutler, quotes Chaucer and Rabelais, and knows all about the famous Damascus blades; throughout, one is struck by the comparatively extensive reading and the justness of observation, of men toiling painfully at their life's labour for daily wages.

As a cabinet-maker stands at the head of the list, we will take cabinet-making first. All the workers in this trade who have written on what they saw, agree in two statements; first, that the French wood-carvings are infinitely superior to our own; second, that their rough or carcass work is just as inferior. "I saw carvings that seemed to me to be impossible to have been done with tools, but must have grown into shape and form, they were so delicate and chaste," says Mr. Hooper. But he adds soon after that the carcass work is not so well done as ours; that our dovetailing and drawer work is neater; that they have more jointing than we have, as the stuff they use in carcass work is very narrow and hard, whereas we use wide, soft pine. A second witness, or rather two in one, Messrs. Hughes and Prior, are even more explicit as to the demerits of the rough work. They say that carpentry is gradually falling into disuse in Paris, in consequence of the substitution of iron for wood, and that such specimens of work by French joiners as they saw were mostly of a very rude kind. Their partitions were made of rough and crooked scantling, which any English surveyor would have condemned; their joists were placed at irregular intervals, and as if laid at random by labourers,

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instead of being fixed by mechanics; their floors were tongued together, and made of boards of any length, so that often the board was joined half way between the joists, with no more security than that given by a narrow wooden tongue and a support underneath; there was apparently no knowledge how to wedge up a piece of framework; and in consequence of certain technical mistakes in workmanship the doors in Paris almost invariably drop on the outside edge. Is it not a common complaint that not a door or window in France will shut properly? That is because they pin their tenons instead of carrying them up through the stiles and wedging up the frame as we should do. To obviate this dropping of the frame in the New Opera House, the sashes are strengthened and disfigured by iron squares screwed on the angles. Another joiner, Mr. Kay, says that at the Palais de Justice "the joinery is being fixed in the style that was constructed in North Britain in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries." "The first joiner that attracted my attention was a smart-looking and active man, about twenty-five years of age. He was employed fixing iron plates, forming three sides of a square, on the top and bottom of some oak casement sashes, the centre piece being two inches longer than the rails, the two sides of the iron plates being one foot six inches long by one and a quarter inches, and sunk level with the rails and stiles of the sash, for the purpose of keeping the sash together, and it really wanted it. The frame looked well enough outside, but when I examined the tenons and mortices they were so badly fitted that neither glue nor lead would have been of any use, and it had none. His chisels were made like masons' scabbling tools or ship carpenters' caulking-irons. He was working very diligently, but the interpreter, M. Fouché, told me he was a blacksmith. He was making little progress, his tools being badly adapted for the work he was executing. I found then that the locksmiths fitted all the locks and hinges on the doors, windows, &c., which in a measure accounted for the insufficient and clumsy nature of their fixing throughout the different buildings in Paris. The locks were all box-locks, and badly made. The hinges were likewise bad, and of ancient design."

Which graphic account lets us a little into the secret of French door and window carpentry! There was a magnificently carved oak pulpit and staircase from Belgium in the Exposition, which all of us who went there must remember. The carving was lovely, but the joiner's work was rough, rude, and unfinished. The scarf joints of the handrail were made the wrong end up, so that if the lucky possessor of that grand bit of carving ever runs his hand rapidly down the rail in descending the stairs he will probably get a few splinters in his flesh, "a sensation which will be more exciting than agreeable," says the critic. Some of the most beautiful carvings, or what appeared to be carvings, by M. A. Latry, were made of pigs' blood and dust, compressed in a steel mould; and some that looked like wrought ebony were only of common wood polished and ebonised. One witness objects to the large use made of the scraper and glass-paper for final polish; but another—our old friend, Mr. Hooper—speaks of this as a characteristic excellence, because proving the cleanliness of the French work. Two cabinet-making firms are specially mentioned in these reports; the one is that of M. Fourdinois, which seems to have been taken in some sense as a type of the trade, and the other that of M. Racault and Co., to which is ascribed what honour there may be in having begun the revolution of '48. The firm of Racault is a very large one, employing from five to six hundred hands in all, and in '48 the men, discontented at the high price of bread and the lowness of wages, struck and made a commotion, which increased until it swelled into the revolution which cost Louis Philippe his crown, and gave France King Stork in place of King Log. "Cabinet-makers," says Mr. Hooper, "I find to be the worst paid men in France, as at home, averaging four to six francs per day; carvers and upholsterers, six francs; women, two and a half francs." They work ten hours a day, piece-work, beginning at six and leaving at half-past five; but they do not work so hard as the English, taking life more easily, and mingling more pleasure with their labour. In general they are paid only once a fortnight, which includes Sunday work as well; and which is by no means an enviable mode of paying workmen's wages.

After the cabinet-makers come the workers in glass and pottery, of whom the first spokesman, Mr. Green, is a "ceramic decorator." "Disclaiming all pretensions to learning, I write as a working man on the executive or manipulative part of decoration only," he says modestly, "leaving schools and styles of art to be treated by writers of far higher attainment." But he writes like an educated man himself, and uses all the artists' terms with judgment and propriety. He speaks of the Sèvres manufacture as offering a comparatively new method of decoration to Englishmen, namely, "painting in clay in a state of what is technically called 'slip' on the raw or unfired coloured body of the article, generally of celadon, sage-green, or stone colour," flowing figures of birds, flowers, grasses, &c., "usually with a freedom, truth, and grace most refreshing to behold, some parts of the decoration standing out in such bold relief as to require the aid of the modelling tool in addition to the painter's touch." But he is not deterred or daunted by even such a name as the Sèvres manufactory. We have improved, he says, heartsomely; and with a distinct recollection of his dejection in 1851 at the inferiority of the British potter, he left the Exposition of 1867 with "feelings nearly akin to pride—certainly with confidence and hope for the future." Minton's china is to him better than any foreign pottery; and of the Limoges enamels sent by that firm, he says they are "clear, soft, and

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bright." He speaks of the use of ormolu as an artistic aid but not technical excellence; and one not used by English potters, who always conscientiously meet their difficulties.

Another worker in clay, Mr. Beadmore, is also opposed to the introduction of metal with porcelain as to the imitation of malachite. He, too, is strongly for Minton, and says that his ware is real pottery, but that in foreign ware you find "wings without feathers, snakes without scales." In encaustic tiles, Mr. Cooper, an encaustic tile-maker, says the English are superior to the foreigner. He advises highly vitrified surfaces for pavements, as less liable to abrade by wear and tear. Michael Angelo Pulham has his word on terra-cotta. The English are first, and next to them the Prussians, who have a good warm colour in their work; the French make theirs too light in tint, unless painted; and painting takes away the character, while the bloom or tint of colour gives richness. The Italian terra-cotta has not been burnt long enough; the Algerian is poor. The best terra-cotta workmen can make twelve shillings a day—a moderate worker can make eight shillings a day; this is for piece-work of ten hours' duration. Women get one and threepence a day, and some men only half-a-crown. About five hundred hands are employed in the fifty or sixty pottery and terra-cotta works in Paris; that is, four hundred and twenty men, forty women, and forty boys. Only four manufactories have steam-engines to mix and grind the stuff; by which, consequently, a large amount of labour that could be prevented is expended to no good and to great pecuniary loss. "'Iron,'" says Mr. Randall, quoting Francis Horner, "'is the soul of every other manufacture, and the mainspring of civilised society.' It forms the greatest gun, the heaviest shot, the longest rope, the sharpest lancet, the most powerful and the most delicate machinery." The French, once so far behind us, are now making rapid strides towards the same point of perfection that we have attained. It is about sixty or seventy years since William and John Wilkinson first introduced coal into France for the purpose of iron-making, and now there are such works as those of Creusot, which alone employ ten thousand men, and turn out one hundred and ten thousand tons of metal annually. A new steel from the works at Charente was exhibited in the Exposition, and got the gold medal; and the Sheffield Atlas Works had also a new steel highly spoken of. Austria and Sweden have adopted the Bessemer process; and in our last exhibition in '62 there was some Taranaki steel of first-rate quality. Some of the French mining and manufacturing proprietors exhibited plans and models of their works and schools, but there were no such things from England. But this is wandering from the special subject, which was pottery.

Shropshire clays and English earthenware are both as good of their kind as can be. Wedgwood puts good figures on inferior substance, but the painting of birds and foliage on the French jars and jardinières is excellent. The superiority of French art in high-class ornamentation is very obvious. As long as we confine ourselves to geometrical forms in hammering, pressing, turning at the lathes, or painting on the surface, we have no difficulty in holding our own; but when any originality of thought is wanted, or the free educated hand in decoration, our deficiency becomes apparent. The Sèvres process of producing white subjects in relief on celadon grounds is kept a profound secret; and though our workmen went over the Imperial Manufactory, and were courteously shown everything else, they were not allowed to see this part of the works. It is kept a secret from even M. Gilles' men. The difference between pâte tendre and pâte dur—it is Mr. Randall who is still speaking—consists in the glaze: "on one the glaze is incorporated with the body of the paste, and allows the colours to sink during the firing, so that they appear soft and mellow, on the other the glaze is so hard that the colours remain upon the surface and have a dusky look. The quantity and quality of the glaze on all china manufactured here (in France) prior to the great revolution was such that the whole surface, including the colours, might be denuded, yet upon putting the piece through the kiln, it would come out reglazed." This writer's opinion is that the true pâte tendre has not been made since the times of Louis the Fifteenth and Sixteenth, and that the nearest approach to it was that made at Nantgarw, about forty years ago, and which now fetches old Sèvres prices. From what he saw he believes that both were *fritt* bodies—that is, bodies, the materials of which are first mixed, then fired, and, lastly, ground up into clay. The result of which is that they have a vitrified appearance throughout. It was, therefore, a paste, and had absorbed a considerable quantity of glaze which became fully incorporated with it, and which it again gave out in the enamelling kiln. Old Sèvres and Nantgarw china have a yellow waxy tint and texture, unlike anything found in the present day. The expense of making it ruined the Nantgarw proprietors, and the cost and risk arising from its liability to crack in the kiln, have deterred others from making it in England. Old pieces of Sèvres slightly painted are greedily bought by certain of the enterprising sort; the slight sprigs are taken off by fluoric acid, and the piece is elaborately painted and regilt, the sharp touch of the chaser being taken off by the hand, and made to look old and worn by being rubbed with a greasy rag. Plates bought for half a guinea when treated in this manner are sold from five to ten guineas. Mr. Randall says that he has seen his own paintings on old Sèvres at noblemen's houses, which have been bought for the real thing; and Mr. Rose, of the Coalport Works, once bought for old Sèvres a pair of his own vases, which had been taken from the works when white, and painted up for the Sèvres market.

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The pâte tendre scratches easily, and the great problem is how to have soft colours and a hard surface. Minton uses a softer glaze than formerly, and more of it; hence the rich grounds he produces now, and the soft sinking of the paintings into the glaze in his ware. M. Gille's figures in semi-biscuit china are remarkable productions; we have nothing like them in England. All his clay is ground very carefully four or five times, after being sifted and washed; and the way in which the figures are propped during baking is quite a science.

In the glass manufacture there are two sides, good and bad, excellent and worthless. In glass painting the French get their high lights by a needle-point and not by a brush or "scrub," which gives a more artistic finish, though it is a longer and more tedious process than by the scrub. They cut out their glass for painted windows in the stupid old way, by papers, which we have long discarded; and they lead up the various pieces while painting, instead of simply cementing them together, so that when unleaded the colour is apt to come off at the edges. Ours, by cement, is a better and quicker process. Some of their colours are better than ours, some of ours better than theirs. They have a rose-pink which we have not got, but our "flashed ruby" far surpasses theirs. Salviati has some new tints altogether, so at least says Francis Kirchhoff, glass painter, who was the artisan selected for this special work. He was much struck with some of the old church windows in Paris, and mentions several; among others, St. Sulpice as being remarkable for peculiar rather than for beautiful glass. "But I will not be certain as to the name," he says, naïvely; "I went into so many churches, and I have got muddled since as to their names." In the modern painted glass there is a tremendous defect from which both England and France equally suffer. Owing, it is supposed, to some corrosive action of the colours employed — probably inferior mineral colours—after the painting is burnt in, the coloured parts get full of small holes letting in the clear light, which is by no means an advantage.

From glass-painting to glass-blowing is only a step. Mr. Barnes, glassmaker, finds lack of ease and finish in the way in which French handles are affixed to jugs, &c. The manipulation, too, is different with them and us. We do our lighter work by hand; in France it is blown in wooden moulds. Their coloured glass is better than ours; but our white glass is better than theirs. Indeed, they do not come near the crystalline purity of our best makers. They make more beautiful things than we do, but they finish them off ill; the feet and stems of their glasses and vases being often scratched; "our masters would decline to receive such work from the hands of their workmen. We in England are making straw-stemmed wine glasses, from one ounce to one ounce and a half," we are quoting Mr. Barnes, "whereas the foreigners make their lightest wines about three ounces, using double the quantity of metal that the English workman does. I myself have made an antique jug ten ounces in weight, which is capable of holding an imperial quart." Our workmen will make ninety wine glasses in six hours, the French under a hundred in ten hours; and yet they can undersell us. The writer of this report, evidently a skilled first-class workman, has three pounds ten shillings a week; a French workman of the like grade has five pounds in the fortnight; our men work forty-eight hours in the week, theirs only forty. Time was when a well sheaved wine glass could be made only in England, when all foreign goods of the kind were flatted or cut at the edge, so as to give them the appearance of having been repaired; but France and Belgium last year both showed wine glasses with tops as well sheaved, hollow stems as well formed, and generally as well made as the best work on the English stalls. "Our flint glass," says one workman, Mr. Swene, as did his predecessor, "is infinitely superior to theirs in colour and brilliancy. They do not come near Osler say, whose flint cut glass is almost as bright as diamonds; their best flint cut glass, Baccarat's, is colourless and dead beside Osler's." One peculiarity is noticed by Mr. Wilkinson. "If you get a melon and a pear, cut them into various depths, and vary the size of opening, you get all the patterns of the lamp-glasses used in France and on the Continent."

In tool making, England is in advance of France, Belgium, and Germany, for the highest excellence in model and the cutting edge in saws and tools. Some houses have English saw-makers, and the highest class of toolmakers on the Continent are not equal to us, though the second class is, as well as cheaper than us. Our make of cutlery is imitated very extensively, as are our trade marks, and most of the best French cutlery is made of English cast steel.

We possess superior natural advantages, more especially good grindstones and a cheaper supply of coal and steel; also more capital and larger commercial relations. Our Sheffield steel-makers have a monopoly of the best Swedish iron.

In hammered iron, the old story of French excellence in art and English superiority in workmanship is again repeated. The English weld their hammered iron, and the French rivet or braze theirs. The French small-arms are beautiful, and the best are better than ours, but our breech-loaders are the best. Their locks are not so good as ours, and their work is dearer, from two to three hundred francs being asked for goods for which we should ask six or seven pounds. There was a capital invention shown—a cavalry sword with a revolver in the hilt; and there was a Belgian gun for fourteen francs seventy-five centimes, which the reporter, Mr. Hibbs, says candidly was the worst he ever handled. But France is rapidly drawing to the front in all kinds of metal work, even in things in which we have for generations held the foremost place. In some things, though, both France and England are distanced; as in

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papier-maché and japanned goods, by Japan and China; in coloured satin, by both countries; in carved woods, by the East generally; in gold and silver filagree work by Malta, Algeria, Persia, India, and Italy; in inventive machinery by the Americans; and in silver repoussé work by Russia. But, on the whole, France and England stand at the head of the greater industries, and, while rivals to each other, leave all the rest of the world behind.

SHAKESPEARE AND TERPSICHORE.

To the British tourist, whiling away the spring days in fair Florence, waiting, it may be, to witness the festivals in honour of a royal marriage, or pausing on his northern flight from Rome or Naples before finally taking wing across the Alps, this announcement on the public bills and placards of the Pergola Theatre is not without interest:

ROMEO E GIULIETTA,

TRAGIC OPERA.

To be followed by

SHAKESPEARE;

or,

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

GRAND BALLET.

He is here, then, in a new guise, this Proteus-like "Divine Williams," "Swan of Avon," or howsoever he be named in the various dialects of men. Rossini has given to the world that exquisite dying lay (the last notes of the ill-fated Desdemona, ceasing in sweetness like a crushed flower), Assisa al piè d'un salice. Verdi has Italianised the "blasted heath," and made Lady Macbeth bid her guests to their revels with a rousing brindisi, Si colmi il calice! Of Romeos and Juliets, Montecchi e Capuleti, there is no end. And in these latter days doth not Hamlet himself "discourse most eloquent music," and a fair Swede warble forth the lovely lunacies of Ophelia until all hearts be melted by the pouring in of sad sweet song at the ears? And now, painting, poetry, and music, having each in turn seized the inexhaustible Shakespeare, and "played upon"—if not "fretted"—him, up rises the goddess of the dance, and, circling the astonished Bard in her gracefully rounded arms, whirls him away to tread a fantastic measure under her guidance.

Shakespeare; or, a Midsummer Night's Dream. Grand Ballet.

Shakespeare, from an Italico-histrionico-terpsichorean point of view!

Allons! To the Pergola! Let us thither on this 25th evening of April, 1868, to see what we shall see.

Note first, that the theatre—one of the most elegant and well-proportioned in Europe—is at the beginning of the evening nearly empty. Romeo e Giulietta, or so much of M. Gounod's opera as the powers that be condescend to give us, is evidently not attracting the public. Neither will we, whose business is with terpsichore, and not with her sister muse, speak of that performance, which, indeed, but too evidently serves as a mere prelude, or "lever du rideau," for the main business of the evening.

Be it recorded, too, that we, sitting in the pit of the Pergola, did altogether judge of the argument or conduct of the ballet by the unassisted light of nature, having neither libretto nor programme to refer to, in case of doubt or bewilderment. And such cases did arise, even rather frequently! But in this way, perhaps, the British tourist may be enabled the more faithfully to report to his countrymen the impression made upon him by "Shakespeare; a grand ballet."

The libretto of a ballet is at best an arbitrary document, so to speak, and one from which there is no appeal. It being evident that should the libretto set forth that when the prima ballerina, nicely balanced on the great toe of her right foot, raises her left leg in the air at right angles with her body, and gently waves her arms to and fro, to soft music, such action means, and shall be held to mean, that the weather is beautiful; that we may look out for squalls; that she is in love; that she never will marry the count; that she would be glad of a little refreshment; that she never felt better in her life, and will be happy to favour the company with a "pas," expressive of unlimited rapture; or any other conceivable statement, the spectator has no choice but to submit and acquiesce. Nay, if he be of a flexible and conformable cast of mind, he may even by-and-by trace in the wavings and pirouetings some faint shadowing forth of the meaning given to them in the libretto! We, however, in our character of British tourist, cast aside all such leading-strings whereby the ballet-master cunningly sways the mind of man hither or thither as he will, and sturdily take our "posto distinto" in the wide pit of the Pergola, unprejudiced by any ex-parte statement as to what we are going to see.

The curtain descends on the first scene of the fourth act of Romeo e Giulietta; and now the buzz and hum of talk grow louder, and the rows of crimson chairs are dotted more thickly with sombre coats—black, brown, blue, or mingled pepper-and-salt. Some sprinkling, too, there is of brighter feminine garments, gossamer bonnets, glossy folds of silk. The white and gold frames of the private boxes—in Italian theatres all the boxes are private boxes—begin to show within them, groups of heads. Heads pretty or ugly, smart or dowdy, young or old, furnished or empty, as the case may be, but all addressing themselves with considerable attention to that canvas screen which divides us as yet from "Shakespeare." The opera has been cut sheer in two, and between its severed portions is inserted the bonne bouche of the evening. Layers of bread and mustard, as it were, on either side of the dainty slice of roast meat. Bread and mustard, not in themselves appetising, but serving to give an added relish to the really savoury and succulent morsel. Also, to drop metaphor, the acts of the opera

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which hem in the precious ballet at either end are useful, in that they enable us—not British tourist merely, but Florentine of Florence, born under the shadow of Giotto's campanile, heritors of the artistic glories, &c. &c., natives of the "land of song," &c. &c., countrymen of the Pergolesis, Palestrinas, Rossinis, Donizettis, Bellinis, and a great many more too numerous to mention—to enjoy our after-dinner coffee at our ease, and stroll in coolly, bringing with us ambrosial odours of cigars, in time to witness a performance so entirely responsive to our artistic proclivities and perceptions.

Descends from his throne the "maestro di capella," who wields his bâton over solo and chorus. Enters in his place the director of the dance music. Rap, rap, rap. Attention in the ranks! One, two, three, four—crash, clang, rub-a-dub-dub-dub! The prelude, &c., symphony to "Shakespeare; a grand ballet," is beginning. Fluttering of fans, rustling of robes, general inspection of pocket-handkerchiefs. The audience in the pit—not "noi altri" of the posti distinti, but the citizens on those hinder benches—seize this opportunity, almost to a man, of pulling forth, each his pocket-handkerchief, and either blowing his nose with some emphasis or wiping his manly brow. The symphony is not peculiarly melodious, nor indeed peculiarly anything—except loud. One has a great deal of noise for one's money; and it is, too, rather military in its character, so that one would not be surprised to be told that it had been originally composed for "Julius Cæsar; a grand ballet," or "Marshal Blücher; a grand ballet."

At length—and truly at no great length—it ceases, and the canvas screen rises; rises slowly, deliberately, almost, one may say, in a cold-blooded manner, as though there were no colto pubblico, no cultured public anxiously awaiting Shakespeare and the twinkling of innumerable legs. Scene the first is clearly festive in its character. The stage represents—according to all the light of nature we can bring to bear upon it—the interior of an inn. There are tables. Tables on the stage usually mean one of two things: banquets, or documents. Here are no documents. There is, if memory serve us, one bottle; may be more. Groups of nondescript hilarious individuals stand near the tables. There is present, the landlord. Him we recognise by his white apron and rubicund nose. Mine host is an universal character—a citizen of the world. Besides, is not this "Shakespeare; a grand ballet?" And does not the scene lie in England? An English landlord whose nose should not be inflamed with liquor, would indeed show us to be ignorant of our subject. By all means let us have couleur locale. And in this case let the colouring be red, and the locality the landlord's nose. Present also, are the landlord's daughter—a pleasing young lady in the costume of the early part of Henry the Eighth's reign—and the cook. The cook need not be described. Never from our tenderest childhood did we witness a Christmas pantomime without beholding the twin brother of that cook.

On a placard hanging at one side of the stage are these words, "Questa sera si rappresenta Macbeth." This evening, Macbeth is to be performed. But where? By whom? No matter.

The nondescript hilarious ones trip a gay measure, and then there enters a—gentleman in black. Hush—sh—sh! Silence in the house! During the opera a little gentle gossip (let us in honesty state that it must, however, be gentle gossip) does no harm. But now that the ballet has begun, we need to concentrate all our faculties. Sight alone suffices not. We must be undisturbed in our breathless attention even by the dropping of a pin. Know ye not this black velvet apparition with a peaked beard? Dense British tourist, who has never seen anything quite like him, stares bewildered. Stupid, stupid, thrice stupid, Saxon! 'Tis he!—'tis Shakespeare! And if you do not recognise your Williams, so much the worse for you. Williams, the divine one, is a personable fellow enough. Not ungraceful, and with well-turned legs cased in black silk hose.

Shakespeare is received with much friendly show of welcome by the landlord, the cook, the landlord's daughter, and the hilarious assembly. These latter individuals, however, smile dumbly from a distance on the Bard, and linger tenaciously around the tables, as though expecting a supply of victuals by-and-by. But soon it appears that Shakespeare, despite his well-turned legs, his graceful mien, and his inky cloak, is not free from blemishes of temper. For no reason whatsoever that we can discover, he quarrels with the landlord, and invites him then and there to box! The landlord turns up his cuffs, and they set-to with a will. The hilarious ones look on smiling, with pointed toes.

Of the style in which Shakespeare and the host display their knowledge of the noble science of self-defence, I feel myself incompetent to convey an idea to the minds of my compatriots. Perhaps it is historic. Perhaps it was thus men boxed in the Elizabethan era. At all events it has this advantage—one, alas! not to be numbered among the merits of our modern P.R.—it can hurt nobody! Babes and sucklings, with puffy pink fists, might box each other so, and come off scatheless. Each man keeps his elbows well in to his side, and makes his clenched hands revolve rapidly over and over one another for some time. Ever and anon he stretches forth his arm and taps his foe lightly on the chest and shoulders. Shakespeare's features express fury; his eyes roll; his brows are knit. But still his fists revolve harmlessly for the most part. At length the landlord unwarily turns his back, and quick as lightning, with the unerring instinct of genius, the Bard seizes the opportunity thus offered to him, of decisive victory. One thump skilfully administered behind, and the landlord falls heavily into the arms of his backer, the cook!

The combat is over. It had no apparent cause, neither does any result seem likely to

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follow from it. But as a picture of national manners it has been interesting. It boots not to follow the "grand ballet" throughout all its many incidents: neither would space permit. For the ballet is in three acts. But we may select one or two more "striking situations" as being calculated to give the English reader what we may call a new idea, and vision of several historical personages. Before the inn disappears to make way for other pictures, it becomes the scene of some rather complicated events. Two ladies—one in a long flowing train, the other in the briefest of tarlatan skirts—enter masked, and go through a great deal of exertion. On the long-robed lady removing her mask and black domino, we discover her to be no less a personage than the Virgin Monarch herself. She has a face of ghastly paleness, surmounted by a flaming wig of the hue vulgarly called "carroty": the towering stiff curls of which are piled high above her majestic brow. Her manners are vehement, and free from anything like the stiffness of court etiquette. Her toleration of her attendant's very scant and airy clothing, may suffice to show that Elizabeth's notions on the subject of costume were much more latitudinarian than we are accustomed to suppose. We soon discover, moreover, that her majesty is the victim of a sentimental passion for the wayward Williams! Unhappy Bard, canst thou not control thy notorious infirmity, so far as to appear in the royal presence *sober?* Or, at the least, not *very* drunk? Alas, humiliating as is the spectacle, the haughty queen must behold her poet, bottle in hand, reeling helplessly, in the last depths of intoxication! In vain she pleads, stretching forth her royal hands, and even bending her royal knees in supplication, Shakespeare will not relinquish his bottle. He continues to take sip after sip, regardless of his queen's increasing disgust and distress, until at length he drops into a chair and snores in drunken lethargy.

Such are the flaws in the brightness of genius! Such are the fatal effects of the bottle!

Elizabeth and her airy maid of honour put on their masks and fly.

The hilarious ones return, but no longer hilarious. They have changed their dresses, and now appear in the garb of court huntsmen, apparently looking for the queen. Royalty is nowhere to be found. The divine one snores, drunk, in his chair. The landlord proposes something to eat—by the unmistakable gesture of putting his fingers into his mouth and making as though he were swallowing—and everybody goes to dinner very cheerfully amid the jubilant music of hunting horns.

Thus ends the first act. The second act is, perhaps, the most wonderful of the three, but though lengthy in action, it may be described with brevity.

The scene represents a garden on the banks of the Thames. Time, evening. Moon slowly rises to illuminate the spires and towers of London. Also to illuminate the dome of St. Paul's—Sir Christopher Wren's St. Paul's!—with prophetic lustre. Moreover, she shines upon the divine one, still drunk and still sleeping. He has been carried by majesty's command to this romantic spot, chair and all.

There enters a tall female figure draped in white with flowing gauzy sleeves and veil. She contemplates the Bard with a soft melancholy, and then, pressing her hand to her heart, raises her eyes to Heaven. Then, she steps on a flowery bank at one side of the stage, and seats herself at a harp. An Erard's patent grand we should judge the instrument to be, by its aspect.

The lady throws back her veil. Surely we know those features! Stay; at the first notes of the harp a numerous corps de ballet trip lightly forth, headed by the airy maid of honour, now attired as Titania! That white-robed figure is the queen. Elizabeth Tudor as she appears at the Pergola Theatre in the year of grace 1868. Ye gods, could I but faintly image forth the spectacle of Queen Elizabeth in scarlet wig and white muslin garments, strenuously playing the harp for dancing girls on the banks of the Thames by lime-light!

They are here, the innumerable twinkling legs for which we (colto pubblico) have waited. Gracefully they skip and bound and twinkle, to our great delight, and apparently also to the entire satisfaction of the Maiden Monarch, who sits patiently thrumming her "Erard's grand" in a corner.

How Shakespeare is aroused and surrounded by sportive nymphs, looking (as well he may) inexpressibly bewildered; how he goes through many intricate evolutions, threading the mazy rows of charmers with an accuracy which, under the circumstances, does him great credit; how Titania pulls from her golden sceptre various little scrolls, bearing the words "Coriolano," "Il rè Lear," "Amleto," &c. &c., and presents them to the poet; need not be particularly chronicled. Still less need we follow a serious under-plot, involving a duel—with rapiers, this time—between the divine one and a gallant young courtier.

Come we to the third and concluding act. This is all pomp, triumph, and a kind of terpsichorean high-jinks.

The second and third acts are to each other

> ——as moonlight unto sunlight,
> Are as water unto wine.

The scene is the queen's palace—which palace let no man try to specify — and the courtiers, male and female, throng to do honour to the Swan of Avon, the great national poet. The fair Elizabeth (that amiable weakness of the bottle all forgotten, or at least forgiven) delights to honour our divine Bard. She takes from a pink box which reposes on a velvet cushion in the hands of a page, a wreath of laurel bound with silver. This she claps on Shakespeare's raven locks (placing it in her agitation somewhat on one side), and then leads him to a chair of state beside her own, whence the illustrious pair witness a series of dances by agile coryphées in gorgeous raiment.

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Various are the dances, brilliant the costumes. But for us, British tourist and exile from home, whom as is well known splendour dazzles in vain, the most remarkable performance shall be The Highland Fling! Exotic highland fling, torn from thy native wilderness, how hast thou blossomed out from sober heathery plaid and bagpipe, to satin crossed with silk, and the crash of a full operatic orchestra! Marvellous truly is the apparition of four-and-twenty dancers, male and female, clad in short white satin petticoats—not wholly guiltless of crinoline—checked with blue ribbons, and wearing each a black velvet reticule on his or her stomach! Which black velvet reticule, the light of Nature enables us to recognise as the Italian for philabeg. Marvellous, too, is the agility with which the dancers twist and jump and toe-and-heel, with some far off resemblance to a break-down nigger dance; none—absolutely *none*—to a highland fling when its foot is on its native heath, and its name is McGregor! But we (colto pubblico) accept it all as a vivid life-like representation of the mode in which those islanders enjoy themselves. We roar, we shout, we applaud, we encore furiously, the satin-kilted. And in the final melée when each corps joins in a grand general winding-up pas, we salute them with special and still increasing fervour.

And now a majestic strain salutes the ear. A strain which causes in the British tourist mind a horrible doubt as to whether he is asleep or awake, sane or insane. That beginning is like—— And yet—no. It must be though! Tum, tum, tum, tum-ti-tum. To be sure, "God — save — our — grā — cious Queen." Of course, The National Anthem—with a difference. With, in truth, several differences. But we file out of the Pergola humming, whistling, or singing, our version of it, in high good humour and satisfaction. O, by-the-by! There is another act of the opera to come, isn't there? Ah, never mind. We have seen "Shakespeare; a grand ballet," and that shall suffice us.

As we leave the theatre, a man steps up to us and says, "Signore, your pardon, but I am a new man here (un'uomo nuovo) and—*might* I ask you what that first piece was about?" "Romeo e Giulietta!" "Oh, ah, thank you. I never heard of them before."

PIT ACCIDENTS.

The portico of a country-house on a smiling April morning. Easy-chairs brought out into the sunshine, books, newspapers, and fancy-work at hand. Before us, a trimly-kept lawn, dotted with white daisies and golden flower-spots; and before that again a spacious park with hundreds of lambs frisking merrily on the sward. A background of lofty hills, some covered with fir-trees, others apportioned out into fields, other ending in vast tracts of prairie-land. The grass on these last has a burnt brown look, making that near us seem brighter and greener by contrast; and the white blossom of the well-laden trees to right and left, the butterflies exulting in the Spring, and the merry carol of the birds perched upon the branches near—all speak of quiet enjoyment and peaceful promise. Beyond the firs a column of white steam, a tall chimney, and a cluster of ugly buildings are discernible, and they denote the whereabout of a coal-pit; puffs and roars of some mighty machinery in our rear, and the frequent noise of swiftly-rushing trains also break in upon our quiet. But these only give human interest to the scenery.

Black figures appear at the park gate nearest the coal-pit; and as they twine slowly past the clump of trees and into the road running in front of us, they form a regular procession preceding an uncouth load borne upon the shoulders of four of their number. The men are carrying their food-tins and lamp-guards, and in some cases their tools, as if they had finished work for the day, and march solemnly on, three abreast, halting every twenty yards to relieve and change places with the bearers of the load. Slowly pursuing the regular path, and not abating an inch of its distance by walking across the grass, as it might easily have done, this strange procession comes abreast the house, and the thing carried resolves itself into a limp figure with two heads, one falling forward as if belonging to a broken puppet, the other, alert and active and with sparkling eyes, behind it. A blackened man, more dead than alive, is stretched full length upon a wooden door, his head and shoulders supported by a grimy urchin who squats behind him and acts as cushion. The two are elevated in the air, and carried along as if they formed a trophy. There has been an accident down yonder pit, and the injured miner is being conveyed home with all the dismal pomp it is the custom of the country to observe. Work is suspended for the day; the workers sacrifice their pay, and the owner loses their labour. To convey the wounded in a rude litter to their homes, to bear them aloft as if in triumph, and to make a formal parade of accompanying them, are deemed evidences of respect and goodwill. There is nothing of superstition in this observance, nothing of fear of a similar evil chance happening to those left in the pit, and nothing in the nature of the accident to denote a more than ordinary risk of casualty. It is simply the Welsh custom, and, as such, has more than the force of law. Not to give up work when one of their number has been injured, would be thought disrespectful to a comrade, so, as we learn later, the remainder of the day is spent convivially at a neighbouring fair.

There is something repellent in these silent grimy men and boys as they march slowly by and the nature of their errand is understood; for faces and bodies are so ingrained with coal-dust that eyes and teeth alone seem human, and gleam unnaturally white; while the pallor of the poor wretch carried and the glassy fixed-

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ness of his stare assert themselves through his artificial blackness much as if he were a painted corpse. He is quite insensible, and lies in his working clothes just as when the huge block of stone crushed him into the coal-bed he was hewing out. Happily, however, this man will, as we hear subsequently, recover. He belongs, moreover, to two local clubs, and will draw sixteen shillings a week while he is laid up. It is to the credit of the pitmen in this valley that they are nearly all equally provident, and that, by organisations which are managed and supported among themselves, they can count upon pecuniary aid when laid low by sickness or disaster. Their doctor, even, though appointed by the coal-owner, is paid by the men themselves, a small per-centage of their earnings being deducted for that purpose. In Durham and Northumberland, it is worth remarking, the cost of medical attendance in cases of accident is borne by the employers, while the colliers pay for professional services if their illness arise from natural causes.

But following the mournful string of people to its destination—the pit-village nestling under the hill behind us—it is piteous to see the faces of the women and children who flock to the doors of the cottages we pass. *They* know what is the matter. No word seems to be spoken, but the news spreads like wildfire and every door-step in succession has its knot of eager watchers, who, scanning hungrily the features of the senseless man, softly murmur out his name with a sigh, in which relief bears equal share with pity. The suspense is terrible until they know the truth, and see it is not their own husband or brother who is carried. Strict silence is observed by the men advancing, much as if it would be a breach of etiquette to speak, and as they all walk before their wounded brother the women have to peer beyond the procession and through the blinding sunshine to ascertain the truth. At last a little cottage, glaringly clean and smart with recent whitewash, is approached, and a tall dark care-worn looking woman with an infant in one arm, and the hand of the other uplifted so as to shade her eyes, learns that it is to her door Misfortune has come. The two chubby rosy children at her feet, whose hearty robust look looms through the conventional crust of coal dirt, continue their play and chatter, but their mother's countenance tells the whole story. A spasmodic contraction of the brow, an uncontrollable quivering of mouth, and a sudden blanching of the face is followed by a half totter as if she would fall among the gaudy little flower-beds with their bordering of the perpetual whitewash; and then all demonstration is over and she goes quietly indoors to make ready for the sad burden which is to follow. She is now wonderfully calm and self-possessed, and gives a fervent "thank God" when told in Welsh, "It's his back,—not very bad;" but if ever bitter sorrow was written upon a woman's face it is on hers. Still slowly, but with a tenderness and care which go far to condone the painful parade they have hitherto seemed to make, the bearers take their charge up the little black garden-path and rest it in the cottage. Within, the evidences of love of home furnished by the plentifully and carefully tended flower-beds are abundant. The wounded man's household goods, his chairs and chest of drawers of brightest and newest mahogany; his ornamental monsters of coarse earthenware, and looking like a cheap parody upon the taste in china affected by fine ladies and gentlemen a century ago; his pipe, and Bible, and Welsh newspaper; his clean flannel jacket and cap behind the door; his second food-tin like a monster shaving-box; all speak mournfully of tastes and habits he is far far removed from now. The people near say he knows he is at home; but he makes no sign, though the doctor assures us he will recover.

On our way to the head quarters of the nest of collieries we are in, we are horrified at meeting another procession of precisely similar character to the first. The same silent grimy men, the same formality of marching, the same sad load behind. Another accident has happened in a different pit while we were ascertaining the result of the first, and a compound fracture of the leg and a broken skull are the results. Two pit-lads, one at each end of the body to steady head and legs separately, are on the rude litter aloft, and a coloured cotton handkerchief hides the worst of the head-injuries from view. But in no other particular does this procession differ from the first. The blackened workmen walk moodily on three abreast, with the same slow step, and swing their food-tins and lamp-guards idly by their side. They too, we discover afterwards, spend the remainder of the day at the fair, and show their sympathy for the wounded man by drinking steadily of the heady new ale, which is the favourite stimulant of the district. Another great pit is idle for the day, and in times when work is not too plentiful, when wages have been necessarily reduced, when "half-time" is common, and the whole trade of the district depressed, scores upon scores of households lose a day's bread-winning because the little community has not the courage to emancipate itself from an ancient but unworthy practice. For there is no pretence that these processions are necessary, or are any comfort to the wounded. Ask the men why they go through this absurd form, and why they do not let the victims be carried home expeditiously, quietly, and without fuss, and their only answer is, "It's always been done in this valley and it wouldn't look kind to poor Evan or Thomas if we hadn't given up our work on the day he was hurted." Here and there you hear of solitary instances in which the proprietor or manager has prevailed upon the men to let a wounded comrade be conveyed home without the entire community of his pit sacrificing a day's pay; and some of the most earnest local ministers of religion have exerted their influence against the custom; but until the soft, tender, impressionable Welsh nature is convinced that it is an injury rather than a help

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to the wounded to celebrate disaster by a holiday, there is little hope of the senseless habit being abated.

"How did the first accident happen, and where?"

"Why, in the pit you were down yesterday. You'll remember asking what the polished stone surface was above you, and our explaining its danger, when you tapped it. Well, sir, you have here a specimen of one of our regular pit accidents in South Wales. They don't make so much talk as explosions, but they kill off more men every year than all the fire-damp in the world; and the worst part of it is that they might be easily reduced. It's an old story now the difference between the system of working coal here and in the north of England; but its moral isn't enforced for all that, and the consequence is that there's twice as much risk and twice as much disaster for the men. There's not a man who really understands the subject who won't tell you that the way the Welshmen persist in working carries off a large percentage of them annually. To show you how our people oppose all alteration on principle, even when it does not affect their comfort, I'll tell you how one of my neighbours was served a few weeks ago. But, to understand it, I must remind you of what you saw yesterday. Long subterranean passages, called 'headings,' sixty yards apart, running parallel with each other, and other passages from and to each cut every sixteen yards. These minor passages are called stalls, and are kept open until the coal is cleared out. The space emptied is filled up with rubbish, and other long passages with feeders cut so that the face of the coal is progressively exhausted, and only such approaches are maintained as enable the men to get to and from their work, and to convey their waggons to the shaft leading to the pit's mouth. The stone above and about there is brittle and unsafe, and is kept unsupported by coal; hence the painful sight you saw an hour ago. This neighbour of mine had, without issuing any manifesto, or asking the men's opinion, quietly set three of them to work at some stalls, and was bringing coal out of each with treble the rapidity in consequence. The roof and sides were necessarily less tried, for it stands to reason that the shorter time heavy stones are left without support, the less likely they are to fall. The men were perfectly satisfied, and did not even grumble at their enforced association in work, and the pit would have been gradually remodelled on the new system without fuss or stir, only, unfortunately, discussions concerning the fifteen per cent reduction of wages cropped up. A proprietor offered to forego the reduction if his men would agree to work three at a face; and directly his offer got wind, presto! the agitators were alarmed, and all compliance was forbidden. What had been adopted as a matter of course, was refused as a matter of principle, and my friend's miners demanded that the method they had abandoned should be restored. Understand me, I don't blame the men. They simply succumbed to the power to which statesmen and potentates have to bow; and in yielding to the public opinion of their district, sacrificed their own interest as well as that of their employers. You'll hear all sorts of reasons given by local managers against changing the plan of working, and the talkers and arbitrators of a lower grade use their influence over their fellows to persuade them that improvement is another word for confiscation. The Welsh are a soft-hearted simple race, who yield easily to the gentle pressure of a countryman, though firm as adamant against 'strangers' who seek to effect reforms."

But a heavy responsibility rests upon their teachers. Let us compare the return for 1866 of the inspectors appointed by the crown to report annually upon coal-mines. Here we have:

	Durham.	South Wales.
Total deaths from accidents . . .	115 . . .	120
Persons employed per life lost . .	310 . . .	243
Tons of coal raised per life lost . .	129,826 . . .	78,137
Deaths from falls of stone and coal .	23—20 p. ct.	. 49—41 p. ct.

We see thus that when the men are concentrated, and the "working face" is pushed on vigorously, one hundred and thirty thousand tons of coal are raised for every life lost, and there are only twenty per cent. of fatal accidents from falls of stone or coal; but where the men are scattered over a large area, and "the face" is moved slowly forward, they can only raise seventy-eight thousand one hundred and thirty-seven tons per life, and the fatal accidents from falls are not less than forty-one per cent. If writers and thinkers on these subjects would but turn their attention to this and cognate details, they might help to effect changes which would save far more human life than fire-damp and gas destroy. But the worst of it is that when a great explosion occurs, excitement and perturbation follow to an extent which warps the judgment and blinds people to other dangers which are as imminent and destructive, but which might be dealt with far more readily. For example, people contend that in Wales there is a much worse top than in the North, and that if the system of the North were adopted, it would be impossible to work the coal. But some of the most eminent authorities in the country attest that the roofways of Wales are, on the whole, better than those of Durham, and that if the Welsh method were introduced there the coal could not be worked. It was tried at one great Durham colliery, and had to be given up. But how shall it be made clear to Welsh pitmen that, besides other disadvantages, their mode of working kills off a vast number of them every year? The difficulty is to penetrate through the veil kept between them and the truth. The masters can't do it, because their motives are suspected directly they speak

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of alteration. The native overlookers won't do it, because, for reasons of their own, they wish matters to remain as they are. Their own advisers and orators won't do it, because they are, on principle, opposed to anything that conduces to their clients' comfort without elevating themselves. In 1865, an average year, *the deaths underground from explosion in the whole of England, Wales, and Scotland were but one hundred and sixty-eight*, while those from *other causes underground* were, in round numbers, *nine hundred*. The deaths from falls of the coal and the roof in the same period amounted to three hundred and eighty-one, or two hundred and thirteen more than from all the explosions of the year put together. Deaths from explosion are rare, considering the numbers employed and the nature of the work; and as raising a false issue and directing agitation to the points which need amendment least, is a favourite device of conservatives and obstructives, "I wish," said the friend whom I questioned upon the two accidents of that one day, "I wish all who are, like yourself, interested in the welfare and safety of the pitmen, to understand what their real dangers and hardships are, and how easily some of them might be avoided.

"The second man you saw carried home had been knocked down by one of the large unwieldy trams or waggons in use here, which weigh nine hundredweight when empty and about a ton and a half when filled with coal. These are especially dangerous when they come down 'a heavy dip'—that is, when the coal lies at a steep inclination, as was the case when the man was injured this morning. There was no means of stopping the tram after he fell, so, as it passed over his legs, it cracked them like sticks of sealing-wax. But the atmospheric engine you saw at work when you were down yesterday will do more to stop this kind of accident than even the small tubs we hope to introduce in place of the trams. That little engine actually does the work of fourteen horses, fourteen men, and fourteen boys, in bringing the coal from the working places to the bottom of the shaft; and it will, we hope, gradually supersede human and animal labour in that branch of pit-work. You see, after the coal has been hewn out by the colliers, the trams filled with it are brought to the shaft by another set of men, called 'hauliers;' and it was to this class that the victim you saw last belonged."

There seemed to be some unhappy fatality connected with my visit to Wales, for the day after the foregoing conversation, while riding over an adjacent mountain, we came upon another wounded collier. We were a considerable distance from any dwelling, and had just cantered across one of the expansive prairie-like sheep-walks with which the mountains hereabouts abound, when we overtook a party of five men engaged in supporting and encouraging a sixth, who bestrode a rough pit-horse, which, in its working gear and harness, plodded slowly along the path. The injured man's eyes and head were bound up in a coloured handkerchief, but the lower part of his face was visible, and was swollen and discoloured as that of a corpse which has been long drowned. I trace a dreadful resemblance in it to a figure I once saw lying blackened and shapeless in the Morgue at Paris, and hastily, and not without a feeling of sudden sickness, ask his companions what has happened. "Blasting the coal, master, when the charge went off before hur were wanted and blowed hur eyes out," is given in reply. His companions hold him on the horse, walking on each side and behind him, propping and balancing his body much as if it were a heavy sack set endways on the clumsy steed. Though so fearfully disfigured, this man is not insensible, and drinks freely from the bottle put to his mouth by the man at the horse's head. These colliers have been digging out from a "level" near—a place in the mountain where the coal crops up to the surface—and are now wending their way to the injured man's home in the valley below. We have the satisfaction of learning, later, that his sight is saved and his injuries not so severe as they seemed; but we learn, at the same time, that his accident is no uncommon one, and that, though seldom fatal, it injures many pitmen every year. It too often proceeds from carelessness in the men. This collier, for instance, only had his own imprudence to thank for his misfortune. He was engaged, in blasting down the coal with gunpowder, when the charge exploded unexpectedly. Now, the operation of blasting is performed thus: The man drills a hole in the "face" of the coal an inch in diameter and about three feet deep. In this hole he places a cartridge filled with gunpowder, attached to the end of a thin iron rod, called a "pricker." He then fills the hole round the "pricker" with coal-dust, which he rams home so as to make it solid and compact. The "pricker" is next withdrawn, leaving a small hole, into which a fuze is inserted, and this, after it is ignited, gives the man sufficient time to get out of the way before the explosion takes place. This man, it was said, went back too soon His instructions were not to go back at all; but they will do it, nearly all of them, only to save themselves the trouble of drilling another hole. This kind of accident, moreover, is almost always caused by indiscretion in putting in too "quick" or too "slow" a fuze, so that in the one instance the miner has not time to retire out of danger, and in the other the fuze takes such a long time to ignite the charge that the man, thinking it has missed fire, returns for the purpose of putting in a fresh fuze, when the explosion suddenly takes place.

The three casualties described occurred within twenty-four hours, two of the most serious close to and within a short time of each other. The victims seen by the writer all belonged to the same valley, and their injuries were attributed by the people interested to defects in the system which it would be easy to remove. Is it unreasonable to infer that,

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apart from economic or commercial reasons, reform is needed in the coal-working of South Wales?

SISTER ANNE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS. CHAPTER III. (CONTINUED).

I NEVER look back to that time without sorrow. It was a great trial for me to leave my quiet home, cross the sea twice, and seek an unwilling debtor in a strange land; but I undertook it willingly, for his dear sake. Neither that, nor the fatigue I underwent, nor the tribulations—and they were many—which awaited me, would now cost me a sigh, but for other things which this ill-fated journey led to. Ill-fated I call it, though I wonder if forty thousand pounds were ever got back so easily as I got ours. Monsieur Thomas had just died when I arrived in Algiers, and as he was a foundling by birth, the state was his only heir. I set forth my claim, it was indisputable, and was granted almost without contest, though not without some delay. So far, surely, I had no reason to complain. Everything was, or seemed to be, over. Yet a strange presentiment of coming misfortune, which I could not conquer, induced me to send on the money beforehand. A terrible storm overtook our boat the day after we left Africa, and seemed destined to justify my worst forebodings. Sea and sky met in a darkness so fearful, that we could scarcely see the white crests of the angry waves roaring around us, as if eager to devour and swallow us up. An agony like that of death came over me. Oh! to see him again, my boy, my darling—to see him once more, and then, if it were God's will, to die; I remember that I prayed thus, not once, but all the time the storm lasted. When the sky cleared, and the great waves fell and danger went by, I rejoiced, thinking I had prevailed, and so I had, but I little guessed at what cost.

In Paris I found a letter from my dear boy, telling me not merely that the money had reached him safely, but also that he had at once secured our old home "on a long lease." It was a great piece of folly, and I knew it, but I could not be angry with him, do what I would. He wrote so joyously, he seemed so happy, so hopeful! And, after all, we were rich. Our forty thousand pounds had been bearing fair interest all these years, and of that interest, owing to rare good fortune, we were not defrauded. If we chose to shut up part of the house and to be prudent, we could indulge ourselves with sleeping once more beneath the old roof. William's children might play by the fountain where my father and Miss Græme had found me reading long ago, and I might know happy hours again within those dear and stately rooms whence I had been banished so many years. The thought made me happy, very happy. I sat by the open window of my room in the Hotel Meyerbeer. It was night, and lights were burning brightly along the dark avenues of the Champs Elysées; I heard the roll of carriages, and every now and then bursts of music and thunders of applause from the cirque close by. I saw and heard all this, but as in a dream. The reality was not the gay scene I gazed on; it was that fair home to which I was returning, as I thought, on the morrow. That dear face, that kind voice, that warm clasp and fond embrace which were to be mine so soon, alone were real; the carriages, the lights, the music, the sounds of the foreign city were the dream. But it was not to be. I had not felt quite well during my journey, and I was very ill the next morning. The English doctor I sent for told me at once that I had brought fever with me from Africa. If it had been possible for me to travel on I would have done so, but I could not. All I could do was to write to my brother, and telling him that Paris was a very fascinating city, I bade him not expect me just yet. I would not say more, I would not alarm him, I would not bring him from his new-found joy to my sick bed; but the self-denial cost me very dear. I did not know if my life was in danger. I only knew that the thought of dying in a strange city, of being laid amongst unknown dead, and, above all, of never seeing my darling again, haunted me night and day, like a perpetual nightmare. Ah! what visions were with me as I lay there looking at the light stealing in through the grey persiennes, conning over the strange furniture, listening to voices which, though kind, were foreign, and pining for my own speech and my own kindred in my own land! At length the probation was over. I got well again, and though the doctor said I was far too weak to travel, I went, spite his warnings and grave looks. This journey was safe, easy, and rapid; I wonder if there was a happier heart than mine when I reached our village, and, alighting from the carriage that had brought me, I passed through the open gates of our old home and saw the fountain dancing in the red sunlight which lit up the front of the house with a deep gorgeous glow. No one, save a servant-girl, came out to meet me. I did not wonder at it; lest fatigue or illness should detain me, I had not fixed the day of my return when I wrote to my dear brother. But he was well, quite well, the servant told me, and out in the grounds walking. I would not let her go and fetch him. I wished to seek him myself. My heart beat with rapture, as, for the first time after so many years, I found myself again in these dear alleys, and saw the same flowers, it seemed to me, that used to bloom there when Miss Græme and I passed them hand-in-hand. And I had helped to win all this back for her son! The thought was very sweet. It was enchanting, and paid me back tenfold for fatigue, and danger, and sickness, and all I had undergone. I walked very far, still seeking my brother, but I could not find him; yet a sound of voices lured and led me from path to path, and alley to alley, till I turned back disheartened. I had entered the lime-tree avenue,

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at the end of which one sees the little fountain with the red house, and a solemn background of deep dark verdure behind it. I was walking slowly, for I felt tired, when I heard the voices again. I stole into the side path, and, lurking there, I waited to see who was coming. Hiding behind a thick clump of trees, I saw this.

A handsome child, a boy richly dressed, came up the avenue, throwing his ball and shouting gaily. After him appeared my brother, and a lady, a beautiful woman, walked by his side. In a moment I knew her; this was Ellen Gibson. My heart seemed to cease to beat. What had brought her here? She spoke. In that light voice which had once sealed my fate, and which I knew so well, she said:

"I wish, Mr. Gibson, you would plant evergreens at the gate. People do stare in so, and I am sure I saw some one just now moving amongst those trees. And if it were not that, there is no banshee——"

"And how do you know there is no banshee?" he interrupted, in his gay voice.

"Well, at all events it is a comfort to know that dreadful old woman is getting civilised, and wears gloves," said Ellen, pushing away with her foot a glove which I had dropped in my hurry to hide from them.

He laughed. He did not see me, but oh! how I saw him, and how happy, how blest he looked, with the strong light shining on his handsome face. The boy had run on, and was now shouting far away. William thought himself alone with Ellen.

"My darling—my darling wife!" he said; and he took her in his arms, and kissed her.

I leaned against the trunk of a tree, and groaned aloud in my agony. But they had walked on; they did not hear me; they did not see me; they left me there alone with my misery. There is a legend of a maiden's soul in Purgatory who bought, at the cost of a thousand years of pain, the boon of visiting earth to console her lover, and who, finding that he had forgotten her for another love, fulfilled her compact in that one moment. Whilst the tempest was howling around the ship that bore me, I had asked of Heaven to see my brother again, and see him well, prosperous, and happy; and now was not my prayer granted, like that poor soul's? Did I not see him again? Was he not prosperous, thanks to me? And after what I had beheld, could I doubt that he was happy? Ah! I can say it from the depths of my heart, I wished him to marry—I wished him to know whatever joy had been denied to my life; I grudged no good woman his love, and even could have felt satisfied to look on and see another loved far more fondly than I had ever been. But that Ellen Gibson should be the one! That she who had so wantonly destroyed my happiness should reap the fruit of every sacrifice! That she who had robbed me of her brother should have stolen mine from me whilst I was away toiling and suffering for him! That she and her child, strangers to my blood, should come and possess the lost home I had redeemed for him—all this it was that seemed too much, and overpowered me! I could not bear it. I sank down on the grass, and wept and moaned there as if my heart would break.

A rustling sound roused me. I looked up and saw her. She stood before me in her rich silks, and with her still young beauty seeming to triumph over my ruined life. The fountain played behind her with a low pleasant sound, but instead of my dear Miss Græme, I saw the evil sorceress who had stolen Miss Græme's son from me. She was alone. She did not know me at first, but on recognising me she turned pale and stepped back.

"What are you afraid of?" I asked, bitterly. "Have I not returned too late to save him from you? Are you not his wife? You were a widow, it seems, though you cannot long have been such. I do not know and do not care by what arts you made him forget that you are almost as old as I am—far too old for him; you did it. You made him so far forget the sister who was away toiling for him, that he did not await her return to marry you. Well, you have prevailed a second time over me. Your brother loved me, and you took him from me, and helped to make him wretched. And, now that you have taken my brother, my child, my darling, make him happy at least, and it will atone, perhaps it will atone, for all the weight of grief you have laid upon me. Tell my brother that he will find me at Rosebower. Here I will never set my foot again."

She did not answer me one word, she looked thunderstruck, nor did I give her time to speak. As fast as I could I walked away. I forgot the carriage, and, leaving by a postern door, I went on to Rosebower like one pursued; it was only the amazed look of the servant who came and opened the door for me that recalled me to myself. I sent her for the driver and my luggage, and sat down in the lonely parlour. How chill, how dreary it looked, with the blinds down and the blank fireplace! Was this my welcome home after near a year's parting? A quick step along the gravel path roused me, and, looking out, I saw my brother. He entered the room pale, disturbed, and half angry.

"Anne," he said, taking me in his arms, "Anne, how is this? Why are you here?"

"My darling," I replied, kissing him, "I am here because it is best for me to be so."

He thought I was angry with him for not waiting my return to marry Ellen, and he proceeded to give me all sorts of reasons, which he had found very convincing, for having taken that step without my knowledge. I heard him out, and seeing she had been silent on my real grievance against her, I was silent too.

"My dear boy," I said, "I love you dearly, and I think I have proved it, but it is not in my power to live at the old house now, so I came here."

"You don't know Ellen," he said, reddening with displeasure; "she is an angel, and your unkindness is breaking her heart."

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It was very hard to bear that, but I bore it too. He did all he could to prevail over me, and not succeeding he left me, not in anger, indeed, but in some bitterness. And from that day forth to this he has never been the same to me—never, and he never will be—never. She has conquered him, and she will keep him.

Mrs. Sydney took a dislike to this part of the country soon after my return, and made her husband leave it. They live in town, and lead a gay life I am told, for William makes a great deal of money by civil engineering, and the old house is once more shut up and deserted. William comes down in the autumn, when his wife goes to a fashionable watering-place. It is then I see him. He says he is happy, but I cannot believe it. He looks pale and careworn. The bright happy boy I had once, the hopeful young man who longed for his paternal home are gone, and in their stead I have the pale, sullen, and discontented husband of Ellen Gibson.

I had written thus far, thinking my tale ended and my little dream of life over. Alas! life never ends; great joy and great sorrow were yet in store for me.

CHAPTER IV.

As I sat one evening reading, and wondering at the might of the solace which lies in books, and listening to the low moaning of the wind which came from the shore up to my very garden-gate, the parlour door opened, and Jane, saying "Mr. Gibson, ma'am," showed William Gibson in.

"I did not know you were in England," said I, trying not to seem flurried, and to look simply glad, as one should be, on seeing an old acquaintance.

"I have not been in England more than a few days," he replied. "I came from Spain."

From Spain! The word called up a wonderful vision of Moorish palaces, beautiful women, and gardens full of orange-trees. I questioned him eagerly, seeming to show, perhaps, more interest than I felt. He answered me shortly enough. William Gibson did not seem to care much about Spain, but even whilst he spoke took down and looked at a little drawing.

"You remember it," I said. "You gave me that thirteen years ago."

"Not thirteen," he said, quickly.

"Thirteen, wanting three months," I replied.

He put down the drawing, as if it turned him, and looked rather gloomy.

"Which do you prefer," I asked, in order to say something, "north or south?"

"I have not been in the north for many years," he answered.

"Yes," said I, perversely, "it is fifteen years since you went to Poland. I remember."

William Gibson looked at me very earnestly.

"It is on purpose," he said, "you say this to remind me that time has been hard upon me since you first came to live here, and yet I will not go without saying what I meant to say. Will you marry me?"

"Marry you?" I exclaimed, bewildered. "Are you a widower, then?"

"Yes. I have been so for some time. "Did you not know it?"

I did not answer him. I could not. Alas! my dead love rising from its grave looked very pale and ghostlike. William Gibson gazed at me with evident sorrow.

"I ought to have known it," he said.

I did know it, and yet I would not lose my second chance.

"You want to marry again," I said, at length.

"Marry again!" he replied, impatiently. "I want to marry you!"

I shook my head.

"We are too old, both of us," I answered, after a while. "What would have been well years ago would not be well now. I could not make you happy, Mr. Gibson."

"You mean that you could not be happy with me," he replied, looking much mortified. "Well, that may be—that may be."

I could not bear this. All prudence, all wisdom forsook me.

"As I liked you fifteen years ago, so I like you now," I exclaimed, from the fulness of my heart; "and if you think——"

"I don't think—I know," interrupted William Gibson, with a decision very unlike his former self; and thus, before I almost knew how, I was engaged to be his wife.

No April smile lit earth and sky as on the sad day of our parting. The night wind sighed around the cottage eaves, and the fire burned brightly on the hearth. And like the season and the hour, so were we. The vexing fever of passion was over with its delights and its torments, but warm and bright was what yet remained in our two hearts. The freshness of youth, the glow of manhood, were gone; but what matter! Enough love was left to give sweetness to the last years of two vexed lives.

Poets and painters never weary of sunsets, but late love is not a favoured theme. The sunset of life is not so fair to the outward eye as that of nature. What matter, I say again. William Gibson and I felt very happy, and for a week—a whole week—no cloud passed between us and that happiness.

As I came home from a pleasant ramble with him one afternoon, and entered Rosebower alone, I found a pale, haggard man sitting in my chair. I paused at the door, and looked in doubt at that dreary face. I looked and could not believe my eyes. Was this William—my William!

"Well, sister Anne," he said, "why do you look at me so? I have come back to you a broken, ruined man. You did much for me; you got me a noble inheritance, and I have lost it all—all—and here I am a burden on you once more; but not for long, Anne—not for long."

I threw my arms around his neck.

"You are my boy, my dear boy still!" I said, fondly.

I did not speak of his wife, nor did he

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mention her name then or later; but I learned through another channel that when the crash in their fortunes came, she, forsaking the husband on whom her extravagance had helped to bring such sorrow, had gone to a distant relation's with her child.

It was sorrow, but not dishonour, thank Heaven. He had gone far, but stopped short of that. But it was ruin, deep, irremediable, and complete. Of that, the little he said soon convinced me. I felt so sure of it, that my course at once lay clear before me. My poor boy's health was shattered, his spirit was conquered, and, thanks to Ellen, his heart was broken. That dear burden I could bear, but I could never entail it on William Gibson!

So, whilst William sat shivering by the fire, I put on my hat and walked out along the road by which I knew Mr. Gibson was to come, and where, indeed, I had appointed to meet him. The November afternoon was calm and still, and the landscape very silent. There had been a sprinkling of snow in the morning, and it had not yet melted away from the trees and hedges; a grey sky, with here and there a faint patch of red caught from the setting sun, bent low over all.

"I, too, have reached my November season," I thought; "and what have I to do with hopes and desires that are only fit for young life in its spring? What should I think of trees and flowers that would want to give forth leaves and blossoms beneath this grey leaden sky! It is too late—for ever too late. I forgot it for a few days, and such forgetfulness was sweet whilst it lasted; but I remember it now, and can no longer delude myself or be deluded."

As I came to this conclusion Mr. Gibson appeared, and walked briskly towards me. My heart failed me a little. He seemed so happy! And as he came up to me and passed my arm within his, and looked at me, he seemed so sure of me—and why should I be ashamed to write it?—so glad to have me. I did not know how to begin; but he was quick to see that something ailed me. He questioned, and I replied. I told him how and why William had come back, and also the resolve I had taken.

He heard me out with more composure than I expected.

"That's Ellen's doing," he said; "I knew it would come to this, and told her so. Poor boy, and so she is not with him! Dragged him down the pit, then left him there."

"And now," I said, feeling he had not understood me, "you see and know, Mr. Gibson, why all that we had planned must be over. My boy has come back to me a child again, and again I am his mother, and——"

"You mean that you consider our engagement broken."

"It cannot be helped, Mr. Gibson."

"Then, Miss Sydney, you may as well prepare for an action for breach of promise. I shall certainly not submit to such treatment."

Tears rose to my eyes.

"I cannot—I cannot put that burden upon you," I said, passionately; "I tell you he is ruined in purse, in mind, in body. I tell you that what remains to him of life is a wreck."

"Matters may not be so bad as you think," he replied, still speaking very composedly; "and, granting that they are, you have all the more need for help. And surely if any one is bound to assist the poor young fellow, Ellen's brother is the man."

"Mr. Gibson, if my boy hears that I am going to marry you——"

"Don't let him hear it," he interrupted, coolly; "do as he did; marry me first, and then tell him."

Here was a cool proposal from a shy man! But, you see, he was shy no longer. I told him so, and he shook his head, and replied that his shyness had cost him too dear not to be put by for ever, and again he proposed a speedy and secret marriage. At first, I was vehement in denial, then little by little I yielded, and began to think he might be right and I wrong. My poor boy had never much liked his brother-in-law, and was so accustomed to be everything to me, that if he learned that I was going to get married, he might just walk off and leave me in a pet. But if I was really married, he would submit to that which could not be undone; or, at all events, he need only learn the truth when it pleased me to tell it to him. I cannot say that I find these arguments very convincing now; then they were irresistibly clear and persuasive, and at their breath all my November theory melted away. So I stole out one morning and got married, a few miles off, and came back feeling very guilty.

"How long you have been away," said William, poking the fire very crossly.

I did not answer.

"Luckily, Mr. Gibson did not look in," he added, more good humouredly. "Why, how scared you look!"

Well might I look scared on hearing such a speech from my darling on my wedding-day.

"Why do you dislike Mr. Gibson?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't dislike him. He is a good-natured fellow, only I do not delight in his company. I care for none save yours, Sister Anne, and, what is more, I do not think I shall leave you again—if you will keep me," he added, drawing me to his side, and resting his head on my shoulder as he used to do when he was a child and felt tired.

I kissed him fondly, but did not dare to say one word.

"I have a fancy that we shall be very happy together," he resumed, more cheerfully; "I have not behaved well to you, and I know it now, though I never meant to be unkind. I thought then it could make no difference—I mean about my marriage; but I have lived to see the evils of concealment in such grave matters."

I had never felt more disconcerted in my life than when my dear boy spoke thus. Besides, this fancy of his to leave me no more, joined to his little relish for my poor husband's company,

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distracted me. I do not know how I answered him, but it must have been very foolishly, for he laughed almost gaily, and said:

"Of course you love me, of course there is, there can be, no one as dear to you as your good-for-nothing William."

I had not said this, but I did not dare to contradict him. I felt greatly troubled, however, and confided my uneasiness to Mr. Gibson.

"Poor boy," he said, kindly, "we must not tell him yet. It would cut him up, but his plan of staying here is all nonsense. He would not like it long, nor should we. When his health mends he will think very differently of the future. In the mean while we must humour him. Eh, little lady?"

I am afraid little lady's heart was sad and heavy that day, for what was she to do between these two? Never so well as after I became his wife did I know the goodness of the man I had married. His gentleness, his patience, firmness, and good sense, did more to cure my poor boy's mind and body than all my love and my nursing. He roused him from his despair to a mood more manly. He showed him exertion to be both possible and desirable, and when we at length acknowledged our marriage to him, William, though he looked a little disconcerted, took it very well, and said to me:

"Well, it was natural, being so lonely, that you should wish for a companion; of course it was."

He spoke apologetically, as if willing to make every allowance for my weakness. He spoke, too, in profound, and I suppose natural, ignorance of my long love and wasted years. Ah! William, William, did it not occur to you that Sister Anne, too, had been young, and that she had had the hopes of youth, whilst you were still in your teens! I suppose the faded cheek could tell no tale of past blushes, and that there was no record of once happy dreams in her eyes!

"I hope you will be very happy," continued my brother, in the same tone; "I hope and believe it. Gibson is a thoroughly good fellow."

I was much nettled to hear my dear husband, the best and noblest of men, called a good fellow, but I must confess that his estimate of my brother was equally moderate.

"There is no harm in him," he said to me; "and now that he has had so severe a lesson, he will do very well."

You see, no man is a hero to his valet, and brothers-in-law are very rarely heroes to one another. It was decided that my brother, who was now quite well again, should once more go to London, and try his fortunes there. To this I could have no objection, but there was an abruptness and a haste about his departure which pained me, and for which I could not help reproaching him when we parted at the station. He heard me without answering one word, but his first letter contained a long justification of his conduct. It was a very fond and foolish letter, and I could not help shedding a few tears as I read it.

"Little lady, little lady," said my husband, as he sat watching me across the breakfast-table, "I know what is passing in your mind. You are vexed with your boy because he left you rather suddenly, and, as you fancy, unkindly. You are clever, little lady, but not very deep. William went away so because the boy was jealous of *me*. Of course you love your brother, but of course you love your husband a good deal more. And when he saw that, he could not bear it. That is why he left us in such a hurry."

I could not help laughing in my husband's face, and I put my brother's letter in his hand, pointing to the following paragraph:

"Ever since I can remember, I have been a trouble to you, and I lately put a climax to my sins by making your poor good-natured husband jealous of *me*. Of course I know that Sister Anne will never love any man as she loves the boy she has reared and been a mother to, but of course, too, it was not pleasant for poor Mr. Gibson to see it, and the only return I could make for all his kindness to me—and it has been great—was to let him have his wife to himself."

My husband having read thus far, became very red, and gave me a shy, demure look of his grey eyes.

"Well," he said, bravely, "and which of the two do you love best, little lady?"

"Find it out," I replied—"find it out."

"Not I; I am sure of you. Find it out indeed!"

I could not help smiling through my tears as I heard him. I loved them both so much that each thought himself the most beloved.

I had a letter from my dear boy yesterday. He is doing very well again, he says, and Ellen is coming back to him. "She left with the shade, and returns with the sunshine," said her brother. I said nothing. Let her but make her husband happy—as happy, if she can, as her brother has made me. The past is a dream to Sister Anne now—a dream from which the sadness daily fades away in the calm joys of the present.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

THIRD NARRATIVE.

THE NARRATIVE OF FRANKLIN BLAKE.

CHAPTER II.

"BETTEREDGE!" I said, pointing to the well-remembered book on his knee, "has Robinson Crusoe informed you, this evening, that you might expect to see Franklin Blake?"

"By the lord Harry, Mr. Franklin!" cried the old man, "that's exactly what Robinson Crusoe has done!"

He struggled to his feet with my assistance, and stood for a moment, looking backwards and forwards between Robinson Crusoe and me, apparently at a loss to discover which of us had surprised him most. The verdict ended in favour of the book. Holding it open before him in both hands, he surveyed the wonderful volume with a stare of unutterable anticipation—as if he expected to see Robinson Crusoe himself walk out of the pages, and favour us with a personal interview.

"Here's the bit, Mr. Franklin!" he said, as soon as he had recovered the use of his speech. "As I live by bread, sir, here's the bit I was reading, the moment before you came in! Page one hundred and fifty-six as follows:—'I stood like one Thunder-struck, or as if I had seen an Apparition.' If that isn't as much as to say: 'Expect the sudden appearance of Mr. Franklin Blake'—there's no meaning in the English language!" said Betteredge, closing the book with a bang, and getting one of his hands free at last to take the hand which I offered him.

I had expected him, naturally enough under the circumstances, to overwhelm me with questions. But no—the hospitable impulse was the uppermost impulse in the old servant's mind, when a member of the family appeared (no matter how!) as a visitor at the house.

"Walk in, Mr. Franklin," he said, opening the door behind him, with his quaint old-fashioned bow. "I'll ask what brings you here afterwards—I must make you comfortable first. There have been sad changes, since you went away. The house is shut up, and the servants are gone. Never mind that! I'll cook your dinner; and the gardener's wife will make your bed—and if there's a bottle of our famous Latour claret left in the cellar, down your throat, Mr. Franklin, that bottle shall go. I bid you welcome, sir! I bid you heartily welcome!" said the poor old fellow, fighting manfully against the gloom of the deserted house, and receiving me with the sociable and courteous attention of the byegone time.

It vexed me to disappoint him. But the house was Rachel's house, now. Could I eat in it, or sleep in it, after what had happened in London? The commonest sense of self-respect forbade me—properly forbade me—to cross the threshold.

I took Betteredge by the arm, and led him out into the garden. There was no help for it. I was obliged to tell him the truth. Between his attachment to Rachel, and his attachment to me, he was sorely puzzled and distressed at the turn that things had taken. His opinion, when he expressed it, was given in his usual downright manner, and was agreeably redolent of the most positive philosophy I know—the philosophy of the Betteredge school.

"Miss Rachel has her faults—I've never denied it," he began. "And riding the high horse, now and then, is one of them. She has been trying to ride over *you*—and you have put up with it. Lord, Mr. Franklin, don't you know women by this time better than that? You have heard me talk of the late Mrs. Betteredge?"

I had heard him talk of the late Mrs. Betteredge pretty often—invariably producing her as his one undeniable example of the inbred frailty and perversity of the other sex. In that capacity he exhibited her now.

"Very well, Mr. Franklin. Now listen to me. Different women have different ways of riding the high horse. The late Mrs. Betteredge took her exercise on that favourite female animal whenever I happened to deny her anything that she had set her heart on. So sure as I came home from my work on these occasions, so sure was my wife to call to me up the kitchen stairs, and to say that, after my brutal treatment of her, she hadn't the heart to cook me my dinner. I put up with it for some time—just as you are putting up with it now from Miss Rachel. At last my patience wore out. I went down-stairs, and I took Mrs. Betteredge—affectionately, you

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understand—up in my arms, and carried her, holus-bolus, into the best parlour, where she received her company. I said, 'That's the right place for you, my dear,' and so went back to the kitchen. I locked myself in, and took off my coat, and turned up my shirt-sleeves, and cooked my own dinner. When it was done, I served it up in my best manner, and enjoyed it most heartily. I had my pipe and my drop of grog afterwards; and then I cleared the table, and washed the crockery, and cleaned the knives and forks, and put the things away, and swept up the hearth. When things were as bright and clean again, as bright and clean could be, I opened the door, and let Mrs. Betteredge in. 'I've had my dinner, my dear,' I said; 'and I hope you will find I have left the kitchen all that your fondest wishes can desire.' For the rest of that woman's life, Mr. Franklin, I never had to cook my dinner again! Moral: You have put up with Miss Rachel in London; don't put up with her in Yorkshire. Come back to the house."

Quite unanswerable! I could only assure my good friend that even *his* powers of persuasion were, in this case, thrown away on me.

"It's a lovely evening," I said. "I shall walk to Frizinghall, and stay at the hotel, and you must come to-morrow morning and breakfast with me. I have something to say to you."

Betteredge shook his head gravely.

"I'm heartily sorry for this," he said. "I had hoped, Mr. Franklin, to hear that things were all smooth and pleasant again between you and Miss Rachel. If you must have your own way, sir," he continued, after a moment's reflection, "there is no need to go to Frizinghall to-night for a bed. It's to be had nearer than that. There's Hotherstone's Farm, barely two miles from here. You can hardly object to *that* on Miss Rachel's account," the old man added slily. "Hotherstone lives, Mr. Franklin, on his own freehold."

I remembered the place the moment Betteredge mentioned it. The farm-house stood in a sheltered inland valley, on the banks of the prettiest stream in that part of Yorkshire; and the farmer had a spare bedroom and parlour, which he was accustomed to let to artists, anglers, and tourists in general. A more agreeable place of abode, during my stay in the neighbourhood, I could not have wished to find.

"Are the rooms to let?" I inquired.

"Mrs. Hotherstone herself, sir, asked for my good word to recommend the rooms, yesterday."

"I'll take them, Betteredge, with the greatest pleasure."

We went back to the yard, in which I had left my travelling bag. After putting a stick through the handle, and swinging the bag over his shoulder, Betteredge appeared to relapse into the bewilderment which my sudden appearance had caused, when I surprised him in the beehive chair. He looked incredulously at the house, and then he wheeled about, and looked more incredulously still at me.

"I've lived a goodish long time in the world," said this best and dearest of all old servants—"but the like of this, I never did expect to see. There stands the house, and here stands Mr. Franklin Blake—and, Damme, if one of them isn't turning his back on the other, and going to sleep in a lodging!"

He led the way out, wagging his head and growling ominously. "There's only one more miracle that *can* happen," he said to me, over his shoulder. "The next thing you'll do, Mr. Franklin, will be to pay me back that seven-and-sixpence you borrowed of me when you were a boy."

This stroke of sarcasm put him in a better humour with himself and with me. We left the house, and passed through the lodge gates. Once clear of the grounds, the duties of hospitality (in Betteredge's code of morals) ceased, and the privileges of curiosity began.

He dropped back, so as to let me get on a level with him. "Fine evening for a walk, Mr. Franklin," he said, as if we had just accidentally encountered each other at that moment. "Supposing you had gone to the hotel at Frizinghall, sir?"

"Yes?"

"I should have had the honour of breakfasting with you, to-morrow morning."

"Come and breakfast with me at Hotherstone's Farm, instead."

"Much obliged to you for your kindness, Mr. Franklin. But it wasn't exactly breakfast that I was driving at. I think you mentioned that you had something to say to me? If it's no secret, sir," said Betteredge, suddenly abandoning the crooked way, and taking the straight one, "I'm burning to know what's brought you down here, if you please, in this sudden way."

"What brought me here before?" I asked.

"The Moonstone, Mr. Franklin. But what brings you now, sir?"

"The Moonstone again, Betteredge."

The old man suddenly stood still, and looked at me in the grey twilight as if he suspected his own ears of deceiving him.

"If that's a joke, sir," he said, "I'm afraid I'm getting a little dull in my old age. I don't take it."

"It's no joke," I answered. "I have come here to take up the inquiry which was dropped when I left England. I have come here to do, what nobody has done yet—to find out who took the Diamond."

"Let the Diamond be, Mr. Franklin! Take my advice, and let the Diamond be! That cursed Indian jewel has misguided everybody who has come near it. Don't waste your money and your temper—in the fine spring time of your life, sir—by meddling with the Moonstone. How can *you* hope to succeed (saving your presence), when Sergeant Cuff himself made a mess of it? Sergeant Cuff!" repeated Betteredge, shaking his forefinger at me sternly. "The greatest policeman in England!"

"My mind is made up, my old friend. Even Sergeant Cuff doesn't daunt me.—By-the-bye, I may want to speak to him, sooner or later. Have you heard anything of him lately?"

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"The Sergeant won't help you, Mr. Franklin."

"Why not?"

"There has been an event, sir, in the police-circles, since you went away. The great Cuff has retired from business. He has got a little cottage at Dorking; and he's up to his eyes in the growing of roses. I have it in his own handwriting, Mr. Franklin. He has grown the white moss rose, without budding it on the dog-rose first. And Mr. Begbie the gardener is to go to Dorking, and own that the Sergeant has beaten him at last."

"It doesn't much matter," I said. "I must do without Sergeant Cuff's help. And I must trust to you, at starting."

It is likely enough that I spoke rather carelessly. At any rate, Betteredge seemed to be piqued by something in the reply which I had just made to him. "You might trust to worse than me, Mr. Franklin—I can tell you that," he said a little sharply.

The tone in which he retorted, and a certain disturbance, after he had spoken, which I detected in his manner, suggested to me that he was possessed of some information which he hesitated to communicate.

"I expect you to help me," I said, "in picking up the fragments of evidence which Sergeant Cuff has left behind him. I know you can do that. Can you do no more?"

"What more can you expect from me, sir?" asked Betteredge, with an appearance of the utmost humility.

"I expect more—from what you said just now."

"Mere boasting, Mr. Franklin," returned the old man obstinately. "Some people are born boasters, and they never get over it to their dying day. I'm one of them."

There was only one way to take with him. I appealed to his interest in Rachel, and his interest in me.

"Betteredge, would you be glad to hear that Rachel and I were good friends again?"

"I have served your family, sir, to mighty little purpose, if you doubt it!"

"Do you remember how Rachel treated me, before I left England?"

"As well as if it was yesterday! My lady herself wrote you a letter about it; and you were so good as to show the letter to me. It said that Miss Rachel was mortally offended with you, for the part you had taken in trying to recover her jewel. And neither my lady, nor you, nor anybody else could guess why."

"Quite true, Betteredge! And I come back from my travels, and find her mortally offended with me still. I knew that the Diamond was at the bottom of it, last year; and I know that the Diamond is at the bottom of it now. I have tried to speak to her, and she won't see me. I have tried to write to her, and she won't answer me. How, in Heaven's name, am I to clear the matter up? The chance of searching into the loss of the Moonstone, is the one chance of inquiry that Rachel herself has left me!"

Those words evidently put the case before him, as he had not seen it yet. He asked a question which satisfied me that I had shaken him.

"There is no ill-feeling in this, Mr. Franklin, on your side—is there?"

"There was some anger," I answered, "when I left London. But that is all worn out now. I want to make Rachel come to an understanding with me—and I want nothing more."

"You don't feel any fear, sir—supposing you make any discoveries—in regard to what you may find out about Miss Rachel?"

I understood the jealous belief in his young mistress which prompted those words.

"I am as certain of her as you are," I answered. "The fullest disclosure of her secret will reveal nothing that can alter her place in your estimation, or in mine."

Betteredge's last-left scruples vanished at that.

"If I am doing wrong to help you, Mr. Franklin," he exclaimed, "all I can say is—I am as innocent of seeing it as the babe unborn! I can put you on the road to discovery, if you can only go on by yourself. You remember that poor girl of ours—Rosanna Spearman?"

"Of course!"

"You always thought she had some sort of confession, in regard to this matter of the Moonstone, which she wanted to make to you?"

"I certainly couldn't account for her strange conduct in any other way."

"You may set that doubt at rest, Mr. Franklin, whenever you please."

It was my turn to come to a standstill now. I tried vainly, in the gathering darkness, to see his face. In the surprise of the moment, I asked a little impatiently what he meant.

"Steady, sir!" proceeded Betteredge. "I mean what I say. Rosanna Spearman left a sealed letter behind her—a letter addressed to *you*."

"Where is it?"

"In the possession of a friend of her's, at Cobb's Hole. You must have heard tell, when you were here last, sir, of Limping Lucy—a lame girl, with a crutch."

"The fisherman's daughter?"

"The same, Mr. Franklin."

"Why wasn't the letter forwarded to me?"

"Limping Lucy has a will of her own, sir. She wouldn't give it into any hands but yours. And you had left England before I could write to you."

"Let's go back, Betteredge, and get it at once!"

"Too late, sir, to-night. They're great savers of candles along our coast; and they go to bed early at Cobb's Hole."

"Nonsense! We might get there in half an hour."

"*You* might, sir. And when you did get there, you would find the door locked." He pointed to a light, glimmering below us; and, at the same moment, I heard through the stillness of the evening the bubbling of a stream.

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"There's the Farm, Mr. Franklin! Make yourself comfortable for to-night, and come to me to-morrow morning—if you'll be so kind?"

"You will go with me to the fisherman's cottage?"

"Yes, sir."

"Early?"

"As early, Mr. Franklin, as you like."

We descended the path that led to the Farm.

CHAPTER III.

I HAVE only the most indistinct recollection of what happened at Hotherstone's Farm.

I remember a hearty welcome; a prodigious supper, which would have fed a whole village in the East; a delightfully clean bedroom, with nothing in it to regret but that detestable product of the folly of our forefathers—a feather bed; a restless night, with much kindling of matches, and many lightings of one little candle; and an immense sensation of relief when the sun rose, and there was a prospect of getting up.

It had been arranged over-night with Betteredge, that I was to call for him, on our way to Cobb's Hole, as early as I liked—which, interpreted by my impatience to get possession of the letter, meant as early as I could. Without waiting for breakfast at the Farm, I took a crust of bread in my hand, and set forth, in some doubt whether I should not surprise the excellent Betteredge in his bed. To my great relief he proved to be quite as excited about the coming event as I was. I found him ready, and waiting for me, with his stick in his hand.

"How are you this morning, Betteredge?"

"Very poorly, sir."

"Sorry to hear it. What do you complain of?"

"I complain of a new disease, Mr. Franklin, of my own inventing. I don't want to alarm you, but you're certain to catch it before the morning is out."

"The devil I am!"

"Do you feel an uncomfortable heat at the pit of your stomach, sir? and a nasty thumping at the top of your head? Ah! not yet? It will lay hold of you at Cobb's Hole, Mr. Franklin. I call it the detective-fever; and *I* first caught it in the company of Sergeant Cuff."

"Aye! aye! and the cure in this instance is to open Rosanna Spearman's letter, I suppose? Come along, and let's get it."

Early as it was, we found the fisherman's wife astir in her kitchen. On my presentation by Betteredge, good Mrs. Yolland performed a social ceremony, strictly reserved (as I afterwards learnt) for strangers of distinction. She put a bottle of Dutch gin and a couple of clean pipes on the table, and opened the conversation by saying, "What news from London, sir?"

Before I could find an answer to this immensely comprehensive question, an apparition advanced towards me, out of a dark corner of the kitchen. A wan, wild, haggard girl, with remarkably beautiful hair, and with a fierce keenness in her eyes, came limping up on a crutch to the table at which I was sitting, and looked at me as if I was an object of mingled interest and horror, which it quite fascinated her to see.

"Mr. Betteredge," she said, without taking her eyes off me, "mention his name again, if you please."

"This gentleman's name," answered Betteredge (with a strong emphasis on *gentleman*), "is Mr. Franklin Blake."

The girl turned her back on me, and suddenly left the room. Good Mrs. Yolland—as I believe—made some apologies for her daughter's odd behaviour, and Betteredge (probably) translated them into polite English. I speak of this in complete uncertainty. My attention was absorbed in following the sound of the girl's crutch. Thump-thump, up the wooden stairs; thump-thump across the room above our heads; thump-thump down the stairs again—and there stood the apparition at the open door, with a letter in its hand, beckoning me out!

I left more apologies in course of delivery behind me, and followed this strange creature—limping on before me, faster and faster—down the slope of the beach. She led me behind some boats, out of sight and hearing of the few people in the fishing-village, and then stopped, and faced me for the first time.

"Stand there," she said. "I want to look at you."

There was no mistaking the expression on her face. I inspired her with the strongest emotions of abhorrence and disgust. Let me not be vain enough to say that no woman had ever looked at me in this manner before. I will only venture on the more modest assertion that no woman had ever let me perceive it yet. There is a limit to the length of the inspection which a man can endure, under certain circumstances. I attempted to direct Limping Lucy's attention to some less revolting object than my face.

"I think you have got a letter to give me," I began. "Is it the letter there, in your hand?"

"Say that again," was the only answer I received.

I repeated the words, like a good child learning its lesson.

"No," said the girl, speaking to herself, but keeping her eyes still mercilessly fixed on me. "I can't find out what she saw in his face. I can't guess what she heard in his voice." She suddenly looked away from me, and rested her head wearily on the top of her crutch. "Oh, my poor dear!" she said, in the first soft tones which had fallen from her, in my hearing. "Oh, my lost darling! what could you see in this man?" She lifted her head again fiercely, and looked at me once more. "Can you eat and drink?" she asked.

I did my best to preserve my gravity, and answered, "Yes."

"Can you sleep?"

"Yes."

"When you see a poor girl in service, do you feel no remorse?"

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"Certainly not. Why should I?"

She abruptly thrust the letter (as the phrase is) into my face.

"Take it!" she exclaimed furiously. "I never set eyes on you before. God Almighty forbid I should ever set eyes on you again."

With those parting words, she limped away from me at the top of her speed. The one interpretation that I could put on her conduct has, no doubt, been anticipated by everybody. I could only suppose that she was mad.

Having reached that inevitable conclusion, I turned to the more interesting object of investigation which was presented to me by Rosanna Spearman's letter. The address was written as follows:—"For Franklin Blake, Esq. To be given into his own hands (and not to be trusted to anyone else), by Lucy Yolland."

I broke the seal. The envelope contained a letter: and this, in its turn, contained a slip of paper. I read the letter first:—

"Sir,—If you are curious to know the meaning of my behaviour to you, while you were staying in the house of my mistress, Lady Verinder, do what you are told to do in the memorandum enclosed with this—and do it without any person being present to overlook you. Your humble servant,

"Rosanna Spearman."

I turned to the slip of paper next. Here is the literal copy of it, word for word:

"Memorandum:—To go to the Shivering Sand at the turn of the tide. To walk out on the South Spit, until I get the South Spit Beacon, and the flagstaff at the Coast-guard station above Cobb's Hole in a line together. To lay down on the rocks, a stick, or any straight thing to guide my hand, exactly in the line of the beacon and the flagstaff. To take care, in doing this, that one end of the stick shall be at the edge of the rocks, on the side of them which overlooks the quicksand. To feel along the stick, among the seaweed (beginning from the end of the stick which points towards the beacon), for the Chain. To run my hand along the Chain, when found, until I come to the part of it which stretches over the edge of the rocks, down into the quicksand. *And then, to pull the chain.*"

Just as I had read the last words—underlined in the original—I heard the voice of Betteredge behind me. The inventor of the detective-fever had completely succumbed to that irresistible malady. "I can't stand it any longer, Mr. Franklin. What does her letter say? For mercy's sake, sir, tell us, what does her letter say?"

I handed him the letter, and the memorandum. He read the first without appearing to be much interested in it. But the second—the memorandum—produced a strong impression on him.

"The Sergeant said it!" cried Betteredge. "From first to last, sir, the Sergeant said she had got a memorandum of the hiding-place. And here it is! Lord save us, Mr. Franklin, here is the secret that puzzled everybody, from the great Cuff downwards, ready and waiting, as one may say, to show itself to *you!* It's the ebb now, sir, as anybody may see for themselves. How long will it be till the turn of the tide?" He looked up, and observed a lad at work, at some little distance from us, mending a net. "Tammie Bright!" he shouted, at the top of his voice.

"I hear you!" Tammie shouted back.

"When's the turn of the tide?"

"In an hour's time."

We both looked at our watches.

"We can go round by the coast, Mr. Franklin," said Betteredge; "and get to the quicksand in that way, with plenty of time to spare. What do you say, sir?"

"Come along."

On our way to the Shivering Sand, I applied to Betteredge to revive my memory of events (as affecting Rosanna Spearman) at the period of Sergeant Cuff's inquiry. With my old friend's help, I soon had the succession of circumstances clearly registered again in my mind. Rosanna's journey to Frizinghall, when the whole household believed her to be ill in her own room—Rosanna's mysterious employment of the night-time, with her door locked, and her candle burning till the morning—Rosanna's suspicious purchase of the japanned tin case, and the two dogs' chains from Mrs. Yolland—the Sergeant's positive conviction that Rosanna had hidden something at the Shivering Sand, and the Sergeant's absolute ignorance as to what that something could be—all these strange results of the abortive inquiry into the loss of the Moonstone, were clearly present to me again, when we reached the quicksand, and walked out together on the low ledge of rocks called the South Spit.

With Betteredge's help, I soon stood in the right position to see the Beacon and the Coast-guard flagstaff in a line together. Following the memorandum as our guide, we next laid my stick in the necessary direction, as neatly as we could, on the uneven surface of the rocks. And then we looked at our watches once more.

It wanted nearly twenty minutes yet of the turn of the tide. I suggested waiting through this interval on the beach, instead of on the wet and slippery surface of the rocks. Having reached the dry sand, I prepared to sit down; and, greatly to my surprise, Betteredge prepared to leave me.

"What are you going away for?" I asked.

"Look at the letter again, sir, and you will see."

A glance at the letter reminded me that I was charged, when I made my discovery, to make it alone.

"It's hard enough for me to leave you, at such a time as this," said Betteredge. "But she died a dreadful death, poor soul—and I feel a kind of call on me, Mr. Franklin, to humour that fancy of her's. Besides," he added, con-

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fidentially, "there's nothing in the letter against your letting out the secret afterwards. I'll hang about in the fir plantation, and wait till you pick me up. Don't be longer than you can help, sir. The detective-fever isn't an easy disease to deal with, under *these* circumstances."

With that parting caution, he left me.

The interval of expectation, short as it was when reckoned by the measure of time, assumed formidable proportions when reckoned by the measure of suspense. This was one of the occasions on which the invaluable habit of smoking becomes especially precious and consolatory. I lit a cigar, and sat down on the slope of the beach.

The sunlight poured its unclouded beauty on every object that I could see. The exquisite freshness of the air made the mere act of living and breathing a luxury. Even the lonely little bay welcomed the morning with a show of cheerfulness; and the bared wet surface of the quicksand itself, glittering with a golden brightness, hid the horror of its false brown face under a passing smile. It was the finest day I had seen since my return to England.

The turn of the tide came, before my cigar was finished. I saw the preliminary heaving of the Sand, and then the awful shiver that crept over its surface—as if some spirit of terror lived and moved and shuddered in the fathomless deeps beneath. I threw away my cigar, and went back again to the rocks.

My directions in the memorandum instructed me to feel along the line traced by the stick, beginning with the end which was nearest to the beacon.

I advanced, in this manner, more than half way along the stick, without encountering anything but the edges of the rocks. An inch or two further on, however, my patience was rewarded. In a narrow little fissure, just within reach of my forefinger, I felt the chain. Attempting, next, to follow it, by touch, in the direction of the quicksand, I found my progress stopped by a thick growth of seaweed—which had fastened itself into the fissure, no doubt, in the time that had elapsed since Rosanna Spearman had chosen her hiding-place.

It was equally impossible to pull up the seaweed, or to force my hand through it. After marking the spot indicated by the end of the stick which was placed nearest to the quicksand, I determined to pursue the search for the chain on a plan of my own. My idea was to "sound" immediately under the rocks, on the chance of recovering the lost trace of the chain at the point at which it entered the sand. I took up the stick, and knelt down on the northern brink of the South Spit.

In this position, my face was within a few feet of the surface of the quicksand. The sight of it so near me, still disturbed at intervals by its hideous shivering fit, shook my nerves for the moment. A horrible fancy that the dead woman might appear on the scene of her suicide, to assist my search—an unutterable dread of seeing her rise through the heaving surface of the sand, and point to the place—forced itself into my mind, and turned me cold in the warm sunlight. I own I closed my eyes at the moment when the point of the stick first entered the quicksand.

The instant afterwards, before the stick could have been submerged more than a few inches, I was free from the hold of my own superstitious terror, and was throbbing with excitement from head to foot. Sounding blindfold, at my first attempt—at that first attempt I had sounded right! The stick struck the chain.

Taking a firm hold of the roots of the seaweed with my left hand, I laid myself down over the brink, and felt with my right hand under the overhanging edges of the rock. My right hand found the chain.

I drew it up without the slightest difficulty. And there was the japanned tin case fastened to the end of it.

The action of the water had so rusted the chain, that it was impossible for me to unfasten it from the hasp which attached it to the case. Putting the case between my knees, and exerting my utmost strength, I contrived to draw off the cover. Some white substance filled the whole interior when I looked in. I put in my hand, and found it to be linen.

In drawing out the linen, I also drew out a letter crumpled up with it. After looking at the direction, and discovering that it bore my name, I put the letter in my pocket, and completely removed the linen. It came out in a thick roll, moulded, of course, to the shape of the case in which it had been so long confined, and perfectly preserved from any injury by the sea.

I carried the linen to the dry sand of the beach, and there unrolled and smoothed it out. There was no mistaking it as an article of dress. It was a nightgown.

The uppermost side, when I spread it out, presented to view innumerable folds and creases, and nothing more. I tried the undermost side, next—and instantly discovered the smear of the paint from the door of Rachel's boudoir!

My eyes remained rivetted on the stain, and my mind took me back at a leap from present to past. The very words of Sergeant Cuff recurred to me, as if the man himself was at my side again, pointing to the unanswerable inference which he drew from the smear on the door.

"Find out whether there is any article of dress in this house with the stain of the paint on it. Find out who that dress belongs to. Find out how the person can account for having been in the room, and smeared the paint, between midnight and three in the morning. If the person can't satisfy you, you havn't far to look for the hand that took the Diamond."

One after another those words travelled over my memory, repeating themselves again and again with a wearisome, mechanical reiteration. I was roused from what felt like a trance of many hours—from what was really, no doubt, the pause of a few moments only—by a voice

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calling to me. I looked up, and saw that Betteredge's patience had failed him at last. He was just visible between the sand hills, returning to the beach.

The old man's appearance recalled me, the moment I perceived it, to my sense of present things, and reminded me that the inquiry which I had pursued thus far still remained incomplete. I had discovered the smear on the nightgown. To whom did the nightgown belong?

My first impulse was to consult the letter in my pocket—the letter which I had found in the case.

As I raised my hand to take it out, I remembered that there was a shorter way to discovery than this. The nightgown itself would reveal the truth; for, in all probability, the nightgown was marked with its owner's name.

I took it up from the sand, and looked for the mark.

I found the mark, and read—

My Own Name.

There were the familiar letters which told me that the nightgown was mine. I looked up from them. There was the sun; there were the glittering waters of the bay; there was old Betteredge, advancing nearer and nearer to me. I looked back again at the letters. My own name. Plainly confronting me — my own name.

"If time, pains and money can do it, I will lay my hand on the thief who took the Moonstone."—I had left London, with those words on my lips. I had penetrated the secret which the quicksand had kept from every other living creature. And, on the unanswerable evidence of the paint-stain, I had discovered Myself as the Thief.

NOTHING LIKE EXAMPLE.

There is to be found in many of what we call the low parts of London, and in the back regions of higher neighbourhoods as well, a shop, established for the sale of cheap periodicals and newspapers, bottles of ink, pencils, bill-files, account books, skeins of twine, little boxes of hard water colours, cards with very sharp steel pens and a holder sown to them, Pickwick cigars, peg-tops, and ginger-beer. Cheap literature is the staple commodity; and it is a question whether any printed sheet costing more than a penny ever passes through the hands of the owner of one of these temples of literature.

One of the leading features in these second-rate newsvenders' windows — perhaps *the* leading feature, and certainly the object to which it is the special desire of the present writer to draw attention — is always a great broadsheet of huge coarsely executed woodcuts, representing, in a style of art the badness of which has never been surpassed at any period of our uncivilisation, every kind of violent and murderous act, every foul and diabolical crime, every incident marked by special characteristics of noisomeness, horror, or cruelty, which the annals of the week preceding the publication-day of this grievous sheet have furnished for the benefit of the morbidly disposed part of the British public. Only the worst crimes are commemorated here. Has some wretched child been tormented with rare ingenuity by an unnatural parent; has some miserable woman been assaulted with more than common ferocity by her husband; has a father been murdered by his son, or a son by his father; has an ardent lover blown out his sweetheart's brains, or his own, or both his sweetheart's and his own; here, as surely as the Saturday comes round, we have thrust before our eyes, certain great woodcut illustrations of such horrors, the original ghastliness of the subjects being supplemented by the additional grimness which the vilest and rudest execution can impart. In a word, if, in the course of the week you have happened to glance at some newspaper paragraph, describing a state of things so shocking that you have instinctively left it unread—an account of some miserable creature left for years in an underground cellar to perish through neglect and starvation—the details of some unnatural piece of cruelty from which you have turned away as a thing by occupying yourself with which you could do no possible good to yourself or any one else—be sure that as certainly as the end of the week comes round, you will find all the details of the horror which you have shrunk from examining, exhibited before you in the window of the cheap newsvender.

While the smaller criminal incidents of the week are thus illustrated, the greater events, the crimes célèbres, are not forgotten. These are always commemorated on a larger scale than the less remarkable acts of atrocity. The greater the crime, the larger the woodcut. This seems to be the simple rule of the artist who furnishes these illustrations. It is not uncommon, in the cases of very distinguished criminals indeed, to follow out the story of his crime from beginning to end; showing him first in the act of committing the murder, then in the condemned cell taking leave of his friends, then on his way to the scaffold or in the pinioning-room, and lastly actually on the scaffold with the noose suspended over his head.

I have before me, at this moment, two of these sheets — rival competitors for public favour—on each of which are represented scenes of the kind just described. They exhibit the final passages in the life of Miles Wetherill, the Todmorden murderer. On one of these broadsheets, is an immense woodcut, with figures eight or nine inches high, illustrating the leave-taking between the culprit and his sweetheart; on the other, is an engraving of the same size giving the public the benefit of the actual scene which took place on the scaffold on the occasion of the execution of this wretched creature and of another more obscure criminal named Faherty. An odious picture this, in which the principal personage is shown standing with bared neck,

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and pinioned arms, under the beam, waiting until the hangman is ready to attend to him—the executioner being engaged at the moment in pulling a white nightcap over the face of the less important malefactor. Nothing can exceed the brutality of this picture. The hangman is adjusting the cap with the air of a sculptor administering the final touches to a favourite work, and the head and face indicated within the cap are blank and shapeless as a pudding ready for boiling.

In both of these illustrations there is strong suggestion of a tendency, conscious or unconscious, on the part of the designer to impart something of the aspect of a hero, or a martyr, to the figure of his principal performer. He is smartly dressed, with neat boots and symmetrical trousers. His hair is parted carefully in the middle, and there is an indescribable air about him of knowing that he is famous, and enjoying the consciousness of fame.

There is no want of variety in these works of art. In one respect, it is true, they are alike—they deal always in horrors. But the horrors are various. Here is a huge design showing the assassination of the Deputy-Lieutenant of Westmeath, on the same page with a smaller cartoon representing the ruinous results of a race between a couple of costermongers' donkeys, and a third in which one of the costermongers, who has managed to kill a gentleman's horse with the shaft of his barrow, is captured by a particularly able-bodied woman, who holds him down on the ground until the tardy policeman arrives on the scene. A man holding a child by the waistband, over the mouth of a well into which he is about to drop it, is shown on another of the broadsheets, side by side with a most horrible representation of a pauper, with a long beard, chopping at his own throat with a huge dinner-knife. The pauper is described in the literary notice which accompanies the woodcut as *holding aside his beard* while in the act of cutting his throat; and the gusto with which the artist has laid hold of this incident is very marked.

So choice a bit of squalor as that furnished by the discovery of the body of the escaped lunatic at Hackney-wick is not forgotten by the artist who has this weekly sheet of horrors to supply. He makes a great effort to be terrible in dealing with this subject. His figures are larger than ever, in the design which illustrates the descriptive notice. He treats the public to some wonderful exhibition of expression in the faces of the discoverers of the body, and is altogether unsparing of printer's ink in developing the dark recesses of his background and the gloomy interior of the cupboard. Still, for some reason or other, he does not succeed in impressing us. Perhaps this is because in trying to force the expression of his discovering workman, he has insanely planted five exceedingly jocose crow's-foot wrinkles at the corner of his right eye—perhaps because his man in the cupboard is not in the least dead; indeed his attitude would be incompatible, not only with death, but even, while the laws of gravitation exist, with genuine sleep. It is curious to observe how utterly devoid of even this kind of power—as of all other power—are these woodcuts, one and all. There is not the slightest token of the commonest and most widely diffused power of observing, on the part of the artist. In the case just quoted, the head of the dead man in the cupboard, is inclined at an angle so slight that its sustainment in its position necessarily implies the use of muscular power. And just in the same way there is in one of the marginal illustrations, on the same page, a representation of an accident at sea, in which two men are shown clinging to the keel of a boat, with hair, which, instead of being matted close to the head by the action of the water, is dressed in barber's-block fashion, and perfectly crisp and curly. In small things as well as large, it seems to be only the great artist who will take the trouble to think what he is about.

But it is not in a critical examination of these precious works of art that we are now engaged. It is the moral rather than the technical result achieved by the artist with which we have to do. What is their effect on the group of men and boys, who always congregate round a fresh sheet as soon as it makes its appearance in the shop-window of the small newsvender? This is the really grave question. That audience of men and boys is never wanting. They stand in little knots gazing at the shocking reproductions of shocking scenes, with every manifestation of profound interest, if not of extreme enjoyment. They seem to gloat over these horrors, and always to enjoy the worst and most violent atrocities the most keenly; and especially is this so with the younger amateurs. They will compare notes one with another on the merits of the art treasures thus liberally exhibited to them free of charge. They make an excellent audience. No especially malignant bludgeon stroke, no exceptionably wide-gaping wound, no more than commonly generous flow of the vital fluid—and the wounds gape very wide, and the vital fluid flows very freely in most of these pictures—is lost upon them. On the contrary, all these delicate touches find in this special public to which they appeal, a keen and sympathising appreciation. Nor, to judge by appearances, is the infliction of the punishment awarded to crime, less attractive as a subject for art illustration to these morbidly disposed youngsters than the commission of the crime itself. The prison scenes, and especially those which represent the transactions which immediately precede the last scene of all, are invariably popular; while as to that really last scene, with its prurient display of nooses, and night-caps, and the other horrible paraphernalia of the scaffold, it is always regarded as a thing of beauty beyond the rest, and a joy—if not for ever, at least for a considerable part of the current week.

It is impossible for any thoughtful man to come upon one of these little groups, and not

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to ask himself whether the habitual contemplation of such representations is a good and wholesome thing for any human being under the sun. Before those who stand thus and absorb with their eyes, are displayed a succession of transactions, in which the desire of vengeance, the lust of plunder, the gratification of ferocity or cruelty, appears as the instigating motive of all sorts of enormities. Blows, stabbings, shootings, violent acts of every kind, are made familiar to all who choose to look, by these prints. Is it good for men—still more is it good for boys—to be familiarised with these things? We do not say that a man or boy will, after scrutinising one of these representations of active crime simply go and do likewise, because of what he has seen; but we do say that when the time of temptation comes his nature will be all the less ready to resist, because of the habitual familiarity with violence. The members of that particular section of society in which the admirers of the illustrations are chiefly to be found, see quite enough of the administration of blows and kicks, and of all varieties of cruel acts in their own domestic circles. If father is drunk or angry and mother comes in his way, what does he have recourse to?—Blows. If mother is in wrath or in liquor and the children come in her way, what does *she* have recourse to?—Blows. A lad brought up in this school gets imbued with its principles quite soon enough under the best circumstances. He becomes quite disposed enough to take it for granted that the infliction of violence by the strong on the weak is the first law of nature. And now he goes to the news shop round the corner, and finds that the same rule obtains elsewhere and that blows and violence are the order of the day, in other places besides his own home, and the homes—to call them so—of nearly all his neighbours. Everywhere blows, everywhere violence. Everywhere tyranny of strong over weak. Why not on his imitative part, as on the part of so many others?

These grim representations of cruel and savage deeds spread out before his eyes, and appealing thus, by the strongest appeal of all, to his understanding — such as it is — tend, plainly, to the utter, utter debasing and degrading of his nature, and tend likewise to a horrible imitation of a long series of horrible examples.

We have confined ourselves hitherto to the illustrations by which the first page of this most objectionable sheet, which is larger than the Times, is entirely filled up. We have dealt with these first, because they appear—speaking a language which all can understand, and which, with the class especially addressed, is more powerful than any collection of words that could be put together—to be more dangerous, and calculated to do more harm, than the literary portion of the work. Still the last must not be lost sight of. The illustrations may be enjoyed free of expense, by those who choose to study them in the shop windows; not so the letter-press. This the public must pay for, and, as it does pay for it, it is logical to conclude that the public likes it. Let us examine for a moment what the public does like.

It likes—else why should it pay money to get them?—detailed accounts of all sorts of ugly and terrible transactions. It likes graphic descriptions, with particulars, of human remains discovered under mysterious circumstances and in an advanced state of decomposition. It likes—judging by the titles of the different articles—to read of Brutal Assaults, of Fearful Murder and Suicide by a Father, of Attempted Wife Murder at Bury, of a Frightful Case of Suicide at the Bristol Union, of a Charge of Murder against the Servant of a Duke, of a Dreadful Assault with a Bar of Red-hot Iron.

It likes the stimulating headings—the composition of which is an art studied very carefully by the compilers of this journal—prefixed to every article. There is a good store of them: Struggle upon a House-top; Desertion and Theft; Threatening the Life of a Tradesman; Stabbing a Witness; Cruelty to a Horse; Cruelty to Fowls; Charge of Maliciously Scalding a Child; Recognition of a Photograph by a Dog; How Illegitimate Children are disposed of; Suicide through Profligacy and Remorse; Five Colliers Buried Alive; Mutilation Extraordinary—Two Men Robbed of their Noses! These are but a few of such titles, and a great number might easily be quoted, suggestive of the same kind of cheerful and profitable reading. It is a curious circumstance, by the way, that when any of the accidents and offences concern any person connected with the public-house trade, this fact is always specially indicated in the title. Thus we read of the Shocking Suicide of a Barmaid, of A Dishonest Potman, of An Assault on a Licensed Victualler, or of some one Annoying the Wife of a Licensed Victualler, as of special and unheard-of wonders.

The audience addressed, in addition to its predilection for horrors, has also a taste—less powerfully developed, but still a taste—for matter of a lighter nature, as a sort of seasoning: just as the public at our transpontine theatres appreciate a farce or a burlesque after a raw-head and bloody-bones melodrama. This audience likes a police case headed, Helping Himself to a Slice of Beef, or A Woman Charged with Attacking the Military. Something of satire, too, is not unpalateable — Parochial Humanity, or The Law of Moving-on; nor is an occasional Joe Miller regarded as objectionable, or even a sentiment, if couched in such flowery language as the following: "A smile is ever the most bright and beautiful with a tear upon (!) it. What is the dawn without its dew?"

But what this particular public seems to like best of all, is a detailed history of the last hours of some well-known malefactor—a kind of murderers' Court Circular. Such a history is furnished of the final scenes in the life of Miles Wetherill.

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The narrative is subdivided into sections, each with a heading or title of a stimulating character. CONDUCT OF THE CULPRITS SINCE THEIR SENTENCE OF DEATH.—WETHERILL'S INTERVIEW WITH HIS RELATIVES AND SWEETHEART.—WETHERILL'S LAST LETTER TO A FRIEND.—TIMOTHY FAHERTY.—THE GALLOWS AND BARRICADES.—THE CROWD.—THE CULPRITS.—THE PINIONING.—THE OFFICIAL PROCESSION TO THE SCAFFOLD.—LAST PREPARATION OF ALL.—CALCRAFT THREATENED.

The subject indicated under each of these headings receives careful and loving treatment, the details being (to employ an expressive phrase much in use among French artists) "caressed" with affection. The description of the machinery of punishment is executed with an especial relish. "The gallows," says our author, "is a black cross-beam, with black drapery shrouding the drop almost up to the criminal's head—all as like as possible to that which was erected in November—most likely the very same framework put together again, resting as usual on the east wall of the prison in New Bailey-street. The usual gap was made in the top of the wall, and the bricks, scarcely set in the mortar in which they were laid after the execution of Allen, Larkin, and Gould, were easily dislodged."

Before arriving at the pinioning scene inside the jail—a part of the horrible performance which seems always in these cases to be described with particular zest—there is something to be said about the gathering outside the prison. "Perhaps, however, the most remarkable feature in the crowd was the great number of women. At neither of the two previous executions in Manchester did women form so large a proportion of those who came first so as to make sure of good places. . . . . With daylight the gallows and the crowd at the foot of it stood confessed. Never was a more motley gathering; not even the red coats of the soldiers were wanting to complete the variety. Every shade of the Lancashire dialect appeared to be represented. The sleeper still slept, the blasphemer still swore, and the shivering young women still divided the shelter of their shawls."

At last we get to "the pinioning:" a scene which gives an opportunity for a little of that hero-worship which the true penny-a-liner almost always indulges in when describing the last hours of a malefactor. We get to the hangman too now, and have occasion to mention him by name more than once: which seems in these cases always to afford infinite satisfaction both to writer and reader. "While the crowd were making merry outside," says the report, "the last preparations were being made within the prison for carrying out the dread sentence of the law. Shortly before eight o'clock the condemned men were taken from their cells to the pinioning room, and their arms and hands were then bound in the usual manner by Calcraft. During this operation Wetherill's fortitude never forsook him; he even manifested a sort of cheerfulness, and conversed with the chaplain and Mr. Wright without the least tremor or hesitation. Faherty, on the appearance of Calcraft, gave way for a moment to the deepest dejection. From this state, however, he soon rallied. . . . . Almost immediately, as the clock struck eight, the door opening from the prison on the scaffold was thrown back upon its hinges, and Faherty came to the front with a firm and unfaltering step. He was dressed in deep mourning, which contrasted strongly with the ghastly paleness overspreading his features. Turning his gaze from the crowd he looked upward, and his lips moved. The white cap was then drawn over his face and the rope adjusted in the ordinary manner. . . . . All eyes were directed to Wetherill, but he stood within three steps of the drop firm and undaunted. One of the warders held him by the arm, but the convict shook him off and said, 'You need not hold me, I can stand by myself.' The cap was adjusted within a minute or two, and the hangman having shaken both by the hand, withdrew the bolt——"

Now who can be the better for all this? Who can be the better for discovering that by committing a great crime a man instantly starts into celebrity, becomes the observed of all observers, has his doings described, his sayings recorded, his bearing, looks, and manner, made the subject of careful investigation and comment?

Is any one deterred from the commission of a misdeed by reading in nauseous and minute detail that some one else has been similarly guilty? Is any one kept from blood-guiltiness, by reading those morbid scaffold chronicles? The influence of such reading is, as events have proved, exactly the other way. We are imitative creatures, and the influence of bad example is notoriously great in the criminal world. Any offence of an exceptional kind, and distinguished by exceptional characteristics, is sure to be followed by another, and another, wonderfully like the first in all respects. Great crimes, such as that of Rush, of Townley, of Wetherill, become a kind of precedent of iniquity. The wretched demoniacally vain jackass (for vanity is at the bottom of all these misdeeds) who has had a row with his sweetheart, says: "I'll serve her as Townley did his sweetheart," and straightway blows her brains out or cuts her throat. The area sneak, who objects to the nature of his reception at the house where his young woman resides, and where no followers are allowed, determines in like manner, as he broods over his wrongs, "he'll do for them people as Miles Wetherill did for them Plows at Todmorden." He adds, moreover, that "he doesn't care if he swings for it," and, to do him justice, when the time comes for swinging, it seems as if this boast were well founded, and he really does not care very much after all. Is he sustained by the thought that his picture will appear in the next number of the Police News, with the

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hangman attending to him on one side, and the clergyman in his surplice attending to him on the other?

A LAKE OF PITCH.

THE great sight of the West Indies, is the Pitch Lake of Trinidad. I therefore, a British traveller, put myself on board the William Burnley, perhaps the smallest steamboat that ever crossed the Atlantic. This adventurous vessel now plies a lucrative trade in the Gulf of Paria, between the port of Spain and the other towns and settlements on the West Coast of Trinidad. And it had the goodness to put me down at La Brea, where passengers for the Pitch Lake are landed.

The reef that formerly enclosed the little harbour has been all exported, for pitch, by an enterprising foreigner; but the boat grounds on pitch—you step ashore on a pitch wharf—pitch is stored on it—you see pitch everywhere—the air is full of pitch—the conversation is all on the price of pitch. A more dreary looking place I have never seen, and as a residence it is even worse than it looks. The few Europeans who live here, or who visit the place frequently, suffer acutely from fever and ague, and the remainder of the population, the modern Piceni—although they seem to have wonderfully adapted their colour, like trout in a stream—to the locality in which they live yet are unable to acclimatise themselves to the fatal atmosphere.

Declining the honour of a seat in a country cart drawn by bullocks, which was going up to the Lake, we started on foot, as we had not to walk more than a mile from the shore. The first part of the road had unfortunately just been "improved" by the Warden; that is, a ditch had been dug on either side—a desirable thing in itself—and the mud, lumps of pitch and turf, had all been thrown into the middle of the road. Luckily, the Warden's energy or his money had not enabled him to carry his improvements far, and we soon came to the track in its original state: a very fair road of natural asphalte, pleasant to walk on, hard and springy. Leaving behind us the few scattered hovels that constitute the village (wretched in themselves, but surrounded by beautiful flowers and splendid pine-apples, for which La Brea is famous), we came out on a most desolate tract, whence the wood had been cleared for timber or by fire, and where many experiments in pitch digging had been made. One's impression naturally is, that where pitch enters so very largely into the composition of the soil, an accidental fire in the woods would soon become inextinguishable and convert the whole district into "Phlegræan Plains," but fortunately the pitch on the surface does not burn.

As the road gradually ascended, it was curious to see how the overlapping layers of pitch assumed a curve, bulging down hill, reminding one somewhat of lava currents, or of Professor Forbes's ingenious experiment for illustrating his theory of the semi-viscous nature of glaciers. Half a mile more brought us to the lake itself. At the first view the whole lie of it is exactly like that of any other small lake in a forest, and one does not notice that it is filled with pitch instead of water. There are the swampy-looking tufts of rushes and rough grass on the margin, the forest ends in a clearly marked line all round, and several islands covered with trees and bushes are dotted over the surface of the lake. The momentary illusion is quickly dispelled by the colour and solid appearance of the flood. The pitch is, throughout nearly the whole surface, hard enough to walk over with perfect safety. It has a peculiarly clean look, and my first impression was that the top had just been removed from the part we first walked over, and that then it had been swept with a very hard broom, or scraped when rather soft, there being the same sort of marks on it that are left by a birch broom on a very soft gravel path. The whole lake is intersected by cracks, or rather valleys, in which the exudations, apparently from different centres, have not quite met. These vary in depth and width, from a few inches to many feet, and at the time of my visit were full of water. In one of the larger I saw a very ugly bull-headed fish, weighing about a quarter of a pound—I presume a "warm-water fish;" but it is surprising that any fish could exist in water so warm and so impregnated with sulphur and other matters. We began to cross these cracks on the back of a very tall nigger, but as this involved some delay as well as the risk of disappearing with the nigger under the water, should he make a false step, or slip at the critical moment, a long plank was substituted, by the help of which we reached the other side of the lake, tolerably dry, and struck into the forest by a sort of corduroy road. Here are what are called "pitch volcanes"—small mounds not more than two feet usually, above the level, in the centre a hole about eight inches in diameter. In some of the holes the pitch, which seemed perfectly liquid, was some few feet below the surface; in others it was near the brim, and in others it was oozing over. I could not ascertain that the volcanes ever showed any greater activity. The first part of the road lay through a grove of palm-trees of great beauty and variety—chiefly the fan-palm and Maximiliana insignia—these were succeeded by a dense forest of fine trees. A sharp turn in the path unexpectedly showed that we were again close to the sea, though some fifty feet above the shore, and disclosed one of the most charming views, on a small scale, that I ever saw: the rippling sea dotted with small rocky islets, each capped with foliage; steep red cliffs to the left, overhung with creepers; all around us the tropical forest with its wonderful forms, its marvellous flowers, its profusion of ferns, and the splendid butterflies

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that "waver, lightly settle, and sleepily swing."

There were drawbacks, however, to the enjoyment of such a scene. I was stepping into the wood, to catch a glimpse of an unknown butterfly that had just settled, when the manager warned me that the place was notorious for its snakes, and showed me a specimen of a very venomous one killed that morning. This may be called a national drawback. An artificial drawback is the fact that this most charming bay has been selected as a likely location for an oil well, and the then result showed the shrewdness of the manager's calculations, for the borings had "struck ile" in two places. Only those who have seen it and smelt it can fully understand the filth and stench of an oil well. A few whiffs of the fetid fluid as it came up the pipe, and a very cursory inspection of the works, satisfied our curiosity about this tropical Petrolia, and, with one more look at the charming nook as we re-entered the forest path, out of sight and smell of the works, we returned to the lake; in the centre of which, some men had been left to dig pitch from two feet at least below the surface. Hitherto the pitch that has been exported has proved a failure for gas purposes; but it had been suggested that this might not be the case if it were taken from some depth under the surface, where it had not been exposed to the action of air and water. A spot was selected where the pitch seemed pure and clean. It was very hard, on and below the surface, and though a large piece would have a certain amount of toughness and elasticity, like partially hardened blue clay, yet it chipped and flew at every stroke of the pick. I noticed that, even on the hardest parts, the ferrule of my umbrella gradually sank down, if pressed upon; and I was assured that in forty-eight hours the large hole that had now been dug would be completely filled up again. A few yards distant from where we stood, the surface was quite soft: too soft to walk swiftly over: and I could not but shudder at the thought of the possibility of being embalmed alive, in pitch. This soft part was usually of a lighter brown colour, nearly as fluid as treacle. Owing, I presume, to the quantity of water with it, we took some up in our hands and were not "defiled," except by a slight smell remaining on the fingers. In this softer part, there were constant small discharges of gas, fetid sighs emitted from the bubbling mass, with small squirts of water and beautifully coloured bubbles. This was the only part of the lake where anything like action seemed to be going on.

The niggers shouldered the barrels of pitch (one of them soon went headlong, barrel and all, into one of the cracks), and carried them off to the cart on the side of the lake. We started on a shorter line for the bank; but we had not gone many steps before the thunderstorm which had long been threatening, burst over us in all its fury. No one who has not experienced the power of a storm in the Tropics, at the beginning of the rainy season, can fully appreciate our situation on the exposed surface of the lake. The immediate effect was to convert the whole of the lake, the cracks having been previously full of water, into a hissing sea of bubbles; and they, with the splash of the huge rain-drops, made it impossible to see whether the water was deep or shallow. Our plank and our tall nigger were not then at our disposition, and being without even a stick, our only means of testing the depth was by the booted legs of one of the party. As long as the water was not much above his knees, we followed him; but that quarter of a mile occupying a long half hour, was very tedious and unpleasant before we were once more on comparatively dry land. The road back to the village was converted into a dirty whirling torrent, carrying down on its surface a brown dusty substance that seemed not to mix with the water. This was bad enough, but it was pleasant walking compared to the Warden's "improvements;" through which, we eventually dragged ourselves, to await the return of the steamer.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY-TREE.

SALAD-MAKING.

The salad is the one of the few links that still binds us to the golden age, and those long-since vanished days of peace, innocence, and no taxes.

To a quiet observer of an epicurean turn of mind nothing can be more agreeable than from the quiet red-curtained bin of a London tavern to look forth upon the humours of man, whose noblest prerogative it is to be denominated "a cooking animal." The lion is generous as a hero, the rat artful as a lawyer, the dove gentle as a lover; the beaver is a good engineer, the monkey a clever actor—but none of them can make a soup, or put together an omelette. The wisest sheep never thought of culling and contrasting his grasses, seasoning them with thyme and tarragon, softening them with oil, exasperating them with mustard, sharpening them with vinegar, spiritualising them with a suspicion of onions; in a word, sheep have existed for thousands of years, yet no ovine genius has yet arisen to suggest and carry out the construction of a *salad*. Our woolly friends still eat their grass pure and simple; as they did on the plains of Mamre and at the foot of Ararat, they do now on the Tartar steppes and at the base of the great Chinese pagodas, and the only condiment their unitiated appetites need is what the Spaniards call the

"Salsa de San Bernado"
("St. Bernard's sauce"),

which, being interpreted, means simply, "Hunger and a good appetite," which sauce was always much affected by your hermit, and it is to your thoughtful and wise hermit that we, no doubt, owe that divine simplicity—the salad.

It is a treat to lurk in a snug corner,

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say, at the Cock Tavern, that old hostelrie mentioned by Pepys, and from which the landlord fled for a time during the Great Plague, and there, under covert of the brown shadow of the comfortable old carved baked mantelpiece, to watch a hungry, but luxurious Queen's Counsel call for his salad, while the cloven kidney, the brown juicy chop, or the slightly crimsoned steak (delicious yet barbaric), are patiently enduring their martyrdom upon the adjacent gridiron that St. Lawrence for ever consecrated.

Presently (culled from we know not what Hesperian Gardens, near Battersea) comes the bowl of green leafage, cool and pleasant to look on as the days grow warmer. The Q.C., weary of arid parchment and tape the colour of men's heart strings, smiles blandly as it appears, for the calenture of London is upon him, and he would fain babble of green fields and budding hedges, such as those which hid his first bird's nest, and the pallid waiter smiles too, for the lettuces are green and dewy, and it freshens even a parboiled man to look on them. I, in ambush behind my dull red curtain, watch the loving way with which the Q.C. lifts out the first crumply lettuce. The moist gardens of Fulham never produced a better. But to hide his self complacency, he asks the waiter snappishly if they haven't any more oil in the house, holds up reproachfully the almost empty cruet glass, and with the air of an alchemist letteth the last teaspoonful of golden fluid trickle lazily down towards the broken stopper. He then shaketh angrily the vinegar, as if irritated at its being full and furnishing no subject for complaint, and then sniffeth at it as if it were smelling salts, and long fasting had made him faint. This for the outer vulgar; but with inward calm the Q.C. proceeds with his agreeable and appetising task, on the great Göthe principle, "never hurrying, never resting." A gentle Pharisaism is diffusing itself through his mind. Really too lazy and hungry to go so far as his West-end club, he is persuading himself that he is saving money and dining quite as pleasantly Eastward. As he sprinkles the floor with the second half of the wet lettuce he secretly repeats a quotation from Doctor William King's pleasant poem, The Art of Cookery:

> Happy the man that has rich Fortune tried,
> To whom she much has given, much denied;
> With abstinence all delicates he sees,
> And can regale himself on toast and cheese.

Nevertheless, philosopher as our Q.C. is, I feel no doubt he will sum up with a pint of Mr. Tennyson's old port, and will then walk on to his club to compare it with the Pall Mall vintage of the "comet year."

The floor as well sprinkled with the lettuce as a cathedral pavement with a priest's aspersoir, our Q.C., with a cunning look, doth next dive his hand into the blue willow-pattern bowl and sorts his vegetables. With what smiling search he forages out the little shining bald onions, whose dainty white roots are small as threads of cotton; with what triumph he draws forth the little white frills of the bleached endive. How disapprovingly and sternly he notices the absence of that French luxury, the little leaflet of innocuous tarragon. How in almost a judicial way he severs the young cucumber, and lets fall its transparent sections into the magic caldron. With a light hand he tosses in the tiny growth of mustard and cress (hot and cool so pleasantly allied), and now his fingers advance towards the cruet standing there patiently with its company of ministering bottles; but first he cracks, unshells, and severs the egg, forgetful of the fowl it might have been, and scoops out with dainty care the hard ball of yellow flour. With what a loving firmness, crushing the globe with the bowl of a teaspoon, he liquefies it into a delicious sauce!

"Remember, Q.C.," I long to cry, thrusting my head in an exhorting way, between the dusty red curtains, "remember the fine old proverb:

"A good salad requires a spendthrift to put in the oil, a miser to pour the vinegar, a wise man to add the mustard, and a madman to stir it all up."

But the Q.C. has not forgotten those pleasant little dinners he used to have at that restaurant in the Rue Vivienne, at that cool first-floor window that commanded a view of the jeweller's shop,

"La Reine Topaze,"

and of the quiet though lively street below, upon whose pavement the fitful lamplight ever fell so softly. He has not forgotten the precepts of that eminent *viveur*, the German professor, who preached so largely and frequently upon the salad, and allowed no profane hands to touch the component parts but his own. With what exquisite and learned unction the worthy Dr. Dreikopf used to first poise and ring with a snap of his finger the china bowl before he began, as the juggler does the plate he is about to send spinning through the air. He used to scrutinise the vessel as a pagan priest would have done, with holy awe, a vessel prepared for a sacrifice. Next, taking a young onion, he perfumed it with a light and playful touch. Next with a wise chemistry he prepared a large silver tablespoon, and filled it four times with the finest oil of Lucca—pure, sweet and golden as ever green Italian olive berry yielded. Four times the oil to one of vinegar, that was Herr Professor's great and primary maxim. "Want of oil," using a rather scattered metaphor, "was," he said, "the great rock on which English salad makers always split." That golden sea was the ocean to which all other liquids and solids were to be mere subsidiaries—one brimming spoonful of brown vinegar the Professor (our Q.C. distinctly remembers) next, with exulting generosity, proud as a witch of her second spell, dashed into the enchanted caldron. The mustard he then added, by instinct, to infuse a flavour and a kindly warmth into the acute vinegar and the lubricating and emollient oil. Then and there

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he also threw in a pinch of sacred salt, that sanatory crystalline dust which the Italian physicians think essential to the wholesomeness of this bouquet of raw vegetables. Their alliterative proverb is

"Salata insalata no è sanata," (a salad unsalted is not salubrious).

The Professor seldom failed, indeed, to quote this saying, and also a pleasant companion to it, which asserts that "after salad should come wine;" not that the Professor wanted any strange lore as excuse for a potation, and it was always observed that the more potations he took the more languages he talked, till at last, on the giddy verge of a classical and polyglottic inebriety, he became a Tower of Babel in himself, and noisy as a cargo of monkeys in a gale of wind.

And here, leaving the Professor at his salad bowl, let us consider that great man's theory that salads were invented by Adam and Eve. "Your Milton," he used to observe, his spectacles glittering as he spoke, "makes Adam and Eve eat nectarines, and then dip out the water from the brook in their dark crimson skins." Better have eaten a salad in that hot weather when the "fervid sun" shot down more warmth than Adam needed. Let us see, he would remark, if salads were invented in Eden. The poet says:

And Eve within due at her hour [punctual, you see
—that is the very starting point of a good
cook] prepared
For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
True appetite, and not disrelish thirst,
Of nectarous draught between, from milky stream
[give me pure water]—
Berry or grape.

In another place Adam refers to drying fruit (hence the incomparable Biffin); and Eve brings for the dinner given to Raphael,

Fruit of all kinds in coat—
Rough or smooth-rined, or bearded husk or shell—
For drink the grape.
She crushes inoffensive must and meaths;
From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed
She tempers dulcet creams.

"Clearly," the Professor went on, "your English Milton was wrong in forgetting to introduce the salad—for in Eden it was probably made of pomegranates, as it is still in Spain—and among the green lettuces Eve no doubt prettily sprinkled a scatter of rose-leaves. Ohne zweifel!" the professor would say—"ohne zweifel!" and then he would dash at the salad mixture like a Bedlamite at the full of the moon.

Now, I do enjoy seeing a man have a good "browse" of green-meat—a real hearty Nebuchadnezzar meal. It is good for us carnivorous animals to go out occasionally to grass. Such also were the opinions of the worthy professor of Jena, and the Q.C. smiles as he recals them to mind, and memory's prism casts a flickering rainbow of poetry over even the humble salad.

How is it that, wandering from my friend the Q.C., concocting his salad at the Cock, I got into the first floor of a restaurant in the Rue Vivienne, and there, in company with a German professor, somewhat of the pedant, I began another bowl of salad, and have left that also unfinished? What matter how it is? Even an ox will shift his ground when he has set his mind on browsing.

Yet once more behold me in ambuscade behind the red curtains of the last bin but one on the left-hand side of the Cock, watching the Q.C. prepare his salad mixture at that open table just northward of the fireplace. He has rinced the lettuces like one does a hat that's got wet; he has culled and arranged his "vegetable store," as Goldsmith hath it; he has perfumed the salad bowl, and prepared the sauce. He now takes an onion forth, and, by cross cuts, reduces a small bar of it to the finest conceivable dice (no Florentine mosaicist ever reduced his lapis lazuli to such small dice), and these, half timidly, half proudly, he scatters into the thick, turbid, yellow fluid. Next he snatches up his knife and fork, and gashes the lettuces and endive, and soaks the small undergrowth of mustard and cress. He then slashes into the soft green leaves with all the fervour of a young haymaker, a woodman working by contract, a forager afraid of surprise, and an Indian grass-cutter anxious about tigers or on the edge of a snaky jungle. Even the French horsemen with the "long sword, saddle, bridle," never slashed up the gay Mamelukes of Mourad Bey half as fast in those green lentil fields at the foot of the Pyramids. A moment ago the lettuces were distinct plants, green-yellow umbrellas without handles and with white milky stumps for ferrules; now they are mere green square segments glistening with oil and brown with vinegar. There is a hatful of them to browse upon.

The Q.C. smiles, and only wishes the German professor could be witness of his present skill and dexterity. He is an apt pupil of Epicurus, and all this time his appetite is whetting at the sight of the slowly-preparing dish. The salad is all but ready: now, calling for another bowl, the Q.C., with the deftness of an Indian juggler, claps the empty bowl on the top of the full one, which he has first stirred with an "energy divine," and reverses the contents of the full one into the empty, so that the oil and vinegar descend in a heavy soaking rain through the pile of green leafage; the salad is at last ready—"a dish for the gods."

At this moment in comes the chop, of a delicious brown; the gravy moistening its comely plump cheek, settling here and there in the dimples in little warm savoury pools, highly appetising. Edward, the waiter, bruising the leathery jacket of the potato dexterously in his napkin, tumbles out the hot flour. A moment after he appears with a pot of silvery-pewter full of frothy stout. Kings, kaisers, princes, can all your ragouts and fricandeaus match a homely meal like this? Alderman of the fattest, your calipash is trash compared to this.

A solitary club dinner is pleasant when you

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are in a contemplative mood, or want to observe the humours of your neighbours. It is amusing to see old Major Crabtree write on the back of his bill his indignation at the soapy potatoes, for the seventeenth time soapy; or that enormous eater Doctor Dodson, crown his cyclopean meal by piles of pancakes and a bottle of heavy port. But one soon exhausts the humours of a club; a tavern presents a larger and more varying flood of character. Another charm about the solitary tavern dinner, such as the Q.C. is now enjoying, is that it excites to pleasant contemplation. One cannot think when busy talking, and thinking excites digestion and quickens the gastric juice. Solitude and society are both good in their way; but after the work of the morning a tired man is sometimes glad to ruminate alone. It is only the fanatic in business, or the mad hunter after money who stand at a buffet, like horses at a manger, gobble up their quantum, and madly plunge again into business, to the total destruction of their digestive powers, and to the loss, perhaps for ever, of all spiritual enjoyment in a good dinner.

The Q.C. eats his salad in the French way, alone, and as he gazes his thoughts revert pleasantly to old days in Paris with the salad-making Professor, long since laid at rest in Père la Chaise under shelter of Balzac's tomb, on that rising ground where there is such a fine view of Paris and the little blue dome of the Invalides shows through the clear sapphirine air of the smokeless and beautiful city. He thinks of old student days, of a certain pretty rosy brown face that used to haunt him from an opposite attic window, of long walks to Fontainebleau, of the table-d'hôte at Meurice's, where he first met the lady who is now his wife, of the lowering day there before the revolution that drove out Charles the Tenth, with its rumble of artillery and sound of distant firing. Then suddenly breaking from this land of memory he calls Edward, and says sternly:

"Bring me a pint of *the* port, mind it is *the* port, and, Edward, some cheese."

The special charm of a salad, the poetry of it, in fact, is on a hot day in summer, when the London pavement is hot enough to cook a chop; when the paint on the shop doors is blistering, and policemen's brains are grilling like toast cheese inside their helmets; when cabmen, very choleric and short in temper, keep taking blue handkerchiefs out of their hats and dashing them in again as if they were trying to knock out the crowns, and street apple women fall asleep totally heedless of custom or urchin thieves; when shop boys drip patterns on the pavement with their water cans, and splash any person they can safely; when Clapham omnibus drivers are thirstier than usual, and drain off stout faster than their smoking horses suck up the pailsfull of water held up to them by the ostlers at the half-way house; when in the West-end squares pleasant music oozes from open windows and venetian blinds; when Covent Garden is one vast flower-bed, and smells like Bucklersbury at "simple time;" when dirty looking men, either burglars tired of the night's prowl, or idle mechanics, go to sleep face downwards in the parks, and give them the appearance of battle-fields, and the Achilles, though not over-clothed, is so hot that he'd scorch you if you touched him—then, I say, it is a pleasure to retire into some old-fashioned tavern—the Mitre, where Doctor Johnson planned with Boswell his venturous trip to the Hebrides; or the Cheshire Cheese, which Goldsmith used to frequent—go and refresh your body with a steak, and your eyes with a salad. As you stir up that moist foliage, the fatigue, and dust, and heat, and stuffyness of London pass from you, and there arise thoughts of

> Flora and the country green,
> Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth,

and of

> Grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild,
> White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine,
> Fast-fading violets covered up in leaves.

At such times I fancy myself again in my own country garden, beating the dark earth from the fibrous root of the portly lettuces, whose large hearts have almost burst the bass zones that bind them, drawing carefully my pink radishes, or lifting out tenderly the young onions with heads scarcely bigger than bodkins; if I divest myself of culinary thoughts, I imagine myself lazily lying on my back, buried in flowering grass, just ripe for the scythe, watching a foot above me an orange-shelled ladybird climbing a grass stalk, or some little blue butterflies flickering round a honey-sweet clover-flower.

The old French proverb-maker, who said,

> Qui vin ne boit après salade
> Est en danger d'être malade,

had many other wise saws relating to food, of more or less value, such as,

> Old fish, old oil, and old friends are best.
> Veal, fowls, and fish fill the churchyards.
> Take the middle of wine, the top of oil, and the bottom of honey.
> After pears wine or the priest.
> After melon wine is a felon.
> You must drink as much after an egg as after an ox.

Of all salads lobster salad is the most picturesque. The red-skinned flesh of the creature contrasts exquisitely (was surely intended to contrast exquisitely) with the tender April green of the virgin lettuce. To parody Brillat Saverin, may I not say, Powerful kings, invincible paladins, friends of Nero and Heliogabalus, how I pity you, for you did not know the lobster salad! The very scarlet of the lobster-shell gives one an appetite. With what a keen pleasure one cleaves the crimson plate-armour of the sea monster through, with one steady, strong pressure from head to heel; from his little black prominent beads of eyes to the last brown filament of his fan-like tail. Easily as an almond from its soft shell,

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gently as a coin from a mould, comes the plastic flesh. We toss it into the bed of lettuce leaves, and prepare for the sauce. We make it like Mrs. Rundall, but with this difference, that we put more oil and less vinegar, and we do not forget essence of anchovy, mushroom ketchup, hard-boiled eggs, or a little mollifying cream, that lubricates everything like good-nature does life.

Mashed potato, rubbed down with cream, mustard, and salt, is no bad substitute for egg, and imparts to a salad a new and not unpleasing flavour. Tomatoes—those warm orange-lobed tropical "pommes d'amour"—are excellent too in a salad. Their rich-flavoured pulp and skin, warm as capsicums, are incomparable, if well spread and diffused on a proper friendly footing with the other ingredients. French beans, too, the most delicate of vegetables, make a salad of great merit. You must boil the beans as usual for the table, then mix a dressing in the following proportions:

Four mustard ladles of mustard,
Four salt ladles of salt,
Three dessert-spoonfuls of essence of anchovy
Four ditto of mushroom ketchup,
Three ditto of the best Italian oil,
Twelve ditto of vinegar,
Three unboiled eggs.

The Spanish use pomegranates in their salads. For myself I dislike that fruit, with the shell like baked clay. The Arab poets may compare the lips of those they love to the rosy, fleshy pips of the pomegranate, but to my mind the acid is of an uninteresting, insipid, and rather disagreeable character. Perhaps they are grateful to men choked with the dusty heat of a Spanish summer; but when one can pick from the green parent tree an orange just yellowing, who would eat the poor watery fruit of Granada? Still, to the epicure, eager for novelty, the thing is worth a trial—at the worst it is only a bowl of salad to be thrown away; for depend upon it servants won't eat what their masters dislike.

In the time of the Regency an old French emigré of taste and refinement, an epicurean marquis, who had, perhaps, often supped at the Petit Trianon, with the thoughtless, laughing ladies of poor Marie Antoinette, or revelled with Egalité in the Palais Royal, on dishes rarer and stranger than even nightingale's brains, or stewed canaries—attended parties at the West-end as a preparer of salads. He carried with him a mahogany case full of sauces and essences, and the result was (well only a Spaniard could express it by joining the tips of his five joined fingers and then blowing them apart with a kiss)—

"Whew! Perfection!"

The old emigré made a fortune, and returned with the Bourbons to regenerate the French with a new salad mixture. Ventre de St. Gris! that man would have deserved a London statue as much as the Duke of York or Jenner, had he only left us his recipe.

If tradition be correct, the Roi de la salade constructed his finest work somewhat on these lines:

He chopped up three anchovies with a little shallot and some parsley; these he threw into a bowl, with a little mustard and salt, two table-spoonfuls of oil, and one brimming over of vinegar; when madly mixed he added to these extremely thin short slices of Westphalia ham, or the finest roast beef, which he first steeped in the seasoning. He then covered the bowl, and in three hours the salad was fit for table. He garnished with parsley and a few wafers of bacon. Perfection is not the word. A dying man would get up to taste that salad. Let that salad be the touchstone of all French cooks. Let it be the first question to aspirants, "Do you know how to construct ('*make*' is a word degrading to the grand science)—do you know, monsieur, how to construct the Salade des Hesperides?" If the wretch says "No," look down again on your blotting-paper, bow, and glance at the door. As the Count de M. once said to Talleyrand of a candidate for a secretaryship:

"I have no great opinion of this man's mind; he has never eaten pudding à la Richelieu, and he does not know the cutlet à la Soubise."

As Brillat Saverin says, profoundly, "It is chiefly men of intellect who hold good eating in honour; the herd is not capable of a mental operation, which consists in a long sequence of appreciations and many severe decisions of the judgment."

FOREIGN OFFICE MIDGES.

It is now about fifteen years since we called attention to the very serious evil of the Agency system at the Foreign Office. We pointed out that it really did give rise in practice to very great abuse in the disposal of public offices in that important department. The Agents were the senior clerks in the Foreign Office, and they invariably contrived by some art or mystery known to themselves, to obtain absolute control over the acts of every succeeding minister who was nominally responsible to Parliament. We mentioned the notorious fact that officers employed abroad in the service of the country, were afraid to draw their salaries when due, because it had been ascertained through experience that it was better for a man's professional prospects that he should let his balance accumulate with an Agent who had control over his professional career; and that it was more prudent, all things considered, to borrow money even at the high rates of interest prevailing in foreign countries, than to disturb a balance which might be looked upon without any great effort of imagination, as a deposit to secure promotion. We added, that it was well known that instances had occurred of embezzlement on the part of these Agents; and that, generally, officers who submitted to the loss and hardship entailed on them by this abuse were rewarded

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by the highest Foreign Office honours in the gift of the Crown, while those who presumed to breathe a whisper against the system were persecuted without scruple or justice, and were ultimately hustled out of the diplomatic service by means as unfair towards individuals as injurious to our national interests. Finally, we closed this strange account of the doings of these Foreign Office midges which were actually going on in London within five minutes' walk of the House of Commons, by alluding to the enormous gains reaped by a few clerks who insisted upon their right to levy a large arbitrary tax upon the handsome sum voted annually to support the dignity of our embassies abroad.

We were met by a hailstorm of denials. A gentleman in the service, supposed to have written the article in question, was interrogated in defiance of constitutional law and precedent, which grants freedom to all proper expression of thought in this country; and after having been fined, upon various pretexts, about five thousand pounds sterling (5000*l.*) was, as stated in the evidence of the Right Hon. Henry Elliot, in a report now before us, coolly shelved. During the fifteen years which have since elapsed, the Agents, five in number, have reigned supreme over the foreign relations of Great Britain, taking toll, without let or hindrance, from six hundred and ten thousand pounds (610,000*l.*) yearly, of public money, beside the large profits which they must derive from bankers' interest on deposits. Moreover, it appears by a list now published for the use of Parliament, that one of these Agents, who is controller of public accounts and financial business at home and abroad connected with the Foreign Office, enjoys the further additional salary of twelve hundred and fifty pounds (1250*l.*) a year, exclusive of fees on the issue of all commissions; while the other four gentlemen, who are each senior clerks of departments, divide six thousand nine hundred and ninety-three pounds (6993*l.*) a year among them.

A few weeks ago, we referred again to this singular abuse, and in consequence of the great dissatisfaction expressed on all sides with reference to the indisputable facts contained in our disclosures, Mr. Potter, one of the members for Rochdale, moved for some returns. At first there was the usual determined effort of the parties interested, to evade inquiry. They did not hesitate to insult the House of Commons by presenting the shortest paper ever printed for the information of a national assembly. It contained five names, set forth in the middle of a very large sheet of paper of the usual official form, and not one word beside. Of course, when Parliament reassembled, this immediately provoked another motion; after a short discussion, tending to make the desired returns as incomplete as possible, they were granted, and a "Statement respecting Foreign Office Agencies" was presented to both Houses of Parliament. To this, has been added a lengthy paper extending over twenty-seven printed folio pages, put forth by the Agents themselves in defence of their profits, and published with curious effrontery at the public expense.

The plea of the Agents is, however, not without a certain importance in the interests of truth, and is valuable as an official confirmation of every fact we have stated on the subject. It contains, moreover, singular proof of the great age that may be attained by a British abuse, however shocking, if it be but defended with sufficient determination and stolidity. We are anxious to give the Agents perfectly fair play—which is all they can expect—and we therefore present their doings once more to our readers in strict accordance with their own account of themselves.

They open their defence by admitting that no fewer than eighty-three years ago the existence of the Agency system in the Foreign Office was recognised as a grave scandal. In 1785, when all sorts of malpractices existed in our public offices, uncensured, the Agencies were thought too bad, even for the lax official morality of that time. Commissioners were appointed to inquire into the suspicious perquisites of the Foreign Office clerks, and it is now recorded that those commissioners expressed an opinion adverse to the whole system. It appears, however, that the practice of rattening is by no means of recent date, and it was put so actively in force on that occasion that, after a fight of ten years, the subject was suffered to rest without a decision. In 1816 it came forward again, and Lord Castlereagh, who was certainly no strict disciplinarian, found the abuse had become so rampant, that it was necessary to check it by special regulations. It is a bold act on the part of the Agents to plead these restraints as a sanction of their trade, but they do. In 1836 there was again a riot as to the immense emoluments derived from these Agencies, and then it was at last admitted by the parties interested, that the objections urged fifty years before by the commissioners of 1786 were valid and sound, but that they had been removed by the regulations of Lord Castlereagh. This meaningless excuse, being supported by no evidence whatever, failed to satisfy the commissioners appointed to investigate the subject by the reform Parliament; and they reported, as their predecessors had reported half a century before, that "they entertained objections to the Agencies," and they said that, "after the best consideration they were enabled to give, they found that those objections were not removed by the reasons adduced in support of a practice which should, in their opinion, be altogether prohibited."

Of course the customary logic of the Midges was again employed with that invariable success which has long since passed into an official tradition.

A Mr. John Backhouse, then Foreign Under-Secretary, and his colleague, who bore the appropriate name of Strangways, composed a hymn

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of praise in defence of the Agents. They declared, in pompous involved periods covering more sheets of foolscap than any one had time to read, that if there were one British institution of which a grateful country might feel prouder than of Magna Charta or the Habeas Corpus, that institution was expressly the Foreign Office Agency system; upon the whole, the Agents were as incorruptible as our judges, and as immaculate as our bishops. Thus this troublesome inquiry was again shelved. But, three years later, in 1840, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir F. Baring, made a personal request to Lord Palmerston to abolish the Agencies. He felt some delicacy in speaking to his colleague in the Cabinet as strongly as the case demanded; and, hence, by an unlucky fatality, selected the Mr. Backhouse above mentioned, for his mouthpiece.

Mr. Backhouse made the most of his opportunity. He drew up an official paper of so Midge-like a character that it is difficult, without severe attention, to elicit any meaning at all from it. But, honestly translated after long study into plain English, it will be found to signify; Firstly, that the Foreign Office is a secret department of the same kind as the Star Chamber, or the old police tribunals of the Austrian and Neapolitan despotisms. Secondly, that no British subject not under the absolute control of this mysterious department had a right to enter there or to make inquiry about anything which was going on, however nearly it might concern himself or his relatives. Thirdly, that if any unprejudiced person not bound to secrecy, were admitted, he would be certain to find out something wrong and report his discovery to the public. Fourthly, that it was inconsistent with the dignity of a hall porter, whose wages were paid out of our taxes, to answer a civil question addressed to him by a taxpayer. Fifthly, that there was no clerk in the Foreign Office who was capable of distinguishing the address on a letter, or who would consent to put it into a bag, without being paid two-and-a-half per cent. upon the income of the person to whom it was addressed. Finally, Mr. Backhouse declared his opinion that British diplomatists should be allowed to smuggle valuable goods into foreign countries, if the fraud were managed under the Queen's seal through a Foreign Office agent; but that this shameful formality was indispensable. The arguments of Mr. Backhouse had the usual effect, and he was so unreasonable and so persistent, that Sir F. Baring and the Lords of the Treasury at length grew weary of the subject and returned no answer to his last letter. Silenced and bored, however, as every successive government had then been for sixty-four years by the dogged opposition of these unruly Midges, no one was ever convinced that the Agencies were anything but a bad business; so once more, in 1850, another commission was appointed to investigate the long-lived grievance. The Midges had grown more insolent with continual impunity, and they handled their weapons so successfully that the commission made no report. Subsequently, Lord Clarendon and Lord Malmesbury expressed a strong wish to abolish the illicit gains of the Agents, as a disgrace to one of the principal departments of State. Mr. Layard has publicly declared them to be a "cheating abomination." Lord Stanley in his turn is now trying to suppress them. But the Agents are still as fresh as ever in defence of their pockets.

Mr. Edmund Hammond is at present Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, and a worthy successor of the eminent Backhouse. Mr. Hammond feels bound both by tradition and usage to defend his fellow-clerks, and thus he speaks:

"The Agency system is old. Three Secretaries of State approved it in 1795. It is optional. It is not obligatory. It is quite a voluntary thing; quite. It is perfectly optional. There is no occasion to employ an Agent. It is a voluntary arrangement. Quite so. Yes. Doubtless everybody is satisfied with it. Nobody complains. It is a perfectly voluntary arrangement. Entirely voluntary. Certainly. There is no objection to it. Friendship is best when bought at two-and-a-half per cent. on the purchaser's income. Agencies are convenient gossip shops. I (Mr. Hammond) should regret their abolition. A gossip shop is a very good thing. A little bought friendship relieves 'the dull routine of official forms.' Gossip shops must give up business if the Agencies are abolished. The sale of friendship is beneficial to the public service—a beneficial arrangement for the clerks. It would be a great disadvantage to the office to abolish Agencies. The sale of 'friendly personal relations' has the greatest possible advantage. I (the Under-Secretary, successor to Mr. Backhouse), 'cannot speak too strongly upon that point.' The public complaints that upon an average it takes the Foreign Office twelve months to answer a letter, and that we are now involved in a costly war because a royal communication was not answered at all, have nothing to do with the Agencies. No Foreign Office clerk is ever idle, or has ever neglected his duty, or has ever done anything wrong whatever. No Agent ever tries to increase his own income by promoting the interests of his clients. Agents and angels are synonymous terms. No such thing as an abuse has ever been heard of." This is the evidence of Mr. Hammond, and it was the evidence of Mr. Backhouse before him, and also the evidence of our worthy friend Mr. Strangways.

Yet there are some queer discrepancies in Mr. Hammond's evidence. He tells us over and over again (and his reiterated answers are reprinted to the great waste of public money), that the Agents never abused their position; yet in reply to question two hundred and eighty-nine of the Select Committee of 1858, he admits that a few years ago two clerks who had not rendered accounts to their clients for several years, embezzled above fifteen hundred pounds sterling, and that when at last the poor officers whom they had defrauded, summoned courage to

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complain, the two clerks would give no explanation of this robbery, and were dismissed in consequence. Mr. Hammond says that no Agent has any power of patronage; but he immediately afterwards explains that whenever there is likely to be a vacancy, an Agent may come to him and say, "Such and such a client of mine is a good man. And," adds Mr. Hammond, naïvely, "I might say that to the Secretary of State."

We are again assured that the employment of an Agent is voluntary, but Mr. Elliot says distinctly: "I have heard that there was one person who had not got an Agent at the Foreign Office; but I know of none now in the diplomatic service." This solitary exception was the officer alleged to have written the exposure in Household Words. But how can a system be called voluntary, when it is kept up by the imposition of fines and professional ruin, inflicted upon every officer who does not subscribe to it? Mr. R. A. Earle, another witness examined, states that he has heard complaints of delay in the payment of salaries. Mr. Earle thinks that while Agency is nominally charged at the rate of one per cent., no Agent condescends to receive less than five pounds a year from any customer, though no diplomatic salary granted to any officer under the rank of Secretary of Legation, reaches five hundred per annum, and many consular salaries are below one hundred.

Mr. Sidney Locock, son of the eminent physician, says that Agents are generally understood to have influence in forwarding the interests of their clients, and that it would be difficult to effect so simple a thing as a change of post, without their interference; and he thinks that if he did not employ an Agent, his chances of promotion would be damaged, unless the whole system were swept away.

The Honourable Julian Fane states that the system of Agencies is an anomalous proceeding altogether. There may be persons in the diplomatic service who do not think they get an equivalent for their money. He has never been able to discover what percentage he pays to his Agent. He has often tried to ascertain what proportion it was of his salary, but has never been able to do so. Mr. Consul Featherstonhaugh employed Mr. James Murray as Agent. Had the highest opinion of him. Should have been embarrassed if he had not had Mr. Murray, who is an honourable and useful man. But whereas Mr. Earle states the Agency fee to be five pounds, it appears by the evidence of Consul Featherstonhaugh that this honourable and useful man took ten guineas.

This is the case upon which the clerks now claim a compensation allowance, only less by one-fifth than the amount of their present receipts! Now, in 1858, when there was no compensation in question, and when it was thought advisable to divert public attention from the large amount of these gains, the select committee were repeatedly informed that the Agency fees were under eighteen hundred a year. And in answer to question two hundred and ninety, Mr. Hammond distinctly explains, in correction of a former statement, that they amounted on an average of three years, to the precise sum of seventeen hundred and ninety-eight pounds per annum. How is it, then, that the agents now claim compensation on four thousand one hundred and ninety-seven pounds per annum?

Surely it cannot be alleged that an abuse which has been nearly one hundred years under discussion, is abolished without sufficient warning. Again, if the system be voluntary, the loss for which the Agents claim recompense may be purely imaginary, as they could never have had any guarantee for the continuance of chance custom which might have been withdrawn at any time. If they have any right to compensation on the abolition of Agencies, they would have had an equal right to be paid an equivalent out of the public taxation for the loss of a single customer. It may be a subject of inquiry whether these prosperous gentlemen, who have enjoyed princely incomes so long for doing nothing, have ever asked themselves where the compensation they expect is to come from, and by whom their exorbitant demand is to be paid. It would be a hazardous process for one of them to stop a respectable working man going to his labour on a raw winter's morning, with a scanty dinner tied up in his pocket-handkerchief, and say to him: "I am a Foreign Office agent. I have for many years received large fees for doing nothing; I have still an income of twelve hundred and fifty pounds (1250*l.*) a year, besides other large fees, for attending to a light and agreeable business during a nominal period of six hours a day. But, as I have been deprived of a part of my income which I am well aware I ought never to have received, I claim to be indemnified by a slice of your family loaf or a pair of your children's shoes, and I will take them, and no denial."

This is a plain statement of the case of these Agents; these are their arguments and their demands recorded literally in their own language, translated out of the Midge or official jargon into English; and there is very little doubt that, unless the case be promptly handled by some competent and resolute member of the House of Commons, the Midges will carry their point as they always have done, and a hundred years hence they may set public opinion at defiance as they set it at defiance one hundred years ago.

NOTABLE IRISH ASSIZES.

The Clonmel assizes opened in the spring of 1828, with the usual ceremonies. Till half a century before, the Irish Bar, when on circuit, travelled on horseback. The crown prosecutor, rejoicing in a good jailful; the leading chiefs, their saddle-bags brimming with record briefs; the gay and sanguine juniors, reckless and light-hearted, came riding into the town the day before the assizes, in as close order as a regiment of cavalry, holsters in front of their saddles, overcoats strapped in tight rolls behind, mounted servants following with saddle-bags

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full of black gowns and law-books, barefooted suttlers tramping behind with stores of wine and groceries. A mile or so from the town, the gentlemen of the grand jury came riding out to vociferously welcome the new-comers. But in '28 the barristers stole down in the mail one by one, and the picturesqueness of the old entry had all disappeared.

The principal trial of the assize of 1828 was that of the assassins of Daniel Mara, a man who had been condemned to death by the secret societies that were then, and still are, the curse of Ireland, for having brought to justice the murderer of a land-agent named Chadwick. The details of this first crime must be given before the trial of Mara's assassins can be thoroughly understood.

Mr. Chadwick was the collector of rents or steward for an influential family who had property near the old abbey of Holy Cross. He was not peculiarly hard or rigorous with the smaller holders, nor was he a bad-hearted man; but he was overbearing and contemptuous to the peasantry, and used to tell them boastingly that he "fattened upon their curses." The country-people, while brooding over their hatred for this man, used to craftily reply on such occasions, that "his honour was mighty pleasant; and sure his honour, God bless him, was always fond of his joke." The poor oppressed people had acquired the Indian's craft and the Indian's unrelenting thirst for revenge. At last Chadwick, who feared nothing, carried his repressions to too daring a pitch. He began building a police-barrack at Rath Common, that was to be a sort of outlying fort to repress the insolence and turbulence of the disaffected people. The secret tribunal of the Tipperary village then resolved that he should die. A reckless, handsome lad, named Patrick Grace, offered himself as the executioner, and was accepted. Relying on the universal sympathy, the lad came to Rath Common, in open day, on the public road, and close to the barrack, where passengers were perpetually passing, he shot Mr. Chadwick dead, and left him weltering in his blood. This murder spread dismay and horror throughout Ireland, showing as it did the daring ferocity of the secret tribunals and the sympathy shown their agents by the great mass of the peasantry. All this time Grace remained bold and careless, conscious of the sure secresy and power of the confederacy to which he belonged, and whose murderous work he had done. But he miscalculated, for a worthy man, named Mara, who saw the shot fired, and who stood near Chadwick at the time, gave immediate information, and Grace was at once arrested and tried at the Clonmel summer assizes of 1827. Grace behaved in a fearless way at his trial, and when he was sentenced to death declared that before a year had gone by he should have vengeance in the grave. His kinsmen had, no doubt, promised him that miserable satisfaction. The gibbet for Grace was erected close to the abbey of Holy Cross, and near the scene of the murder. Patrick was escorted to the last scene of his short life by a body of troops, and fifteen thousand awe-struck people assembled round the scaffold. To the surprise and disappointment of the peasantry, their martyr, though showing no fear of death, expressed himself contrite, and implored the spectators to take warning by his example. While the body of the poor lad still swung in the air, his gloves were handed by one of his relations as a keepsake to an old man, a friend of Patrick's, named John Russell, who, drawing them on, swore at the same time that he would never take them off "till Paddy Grace was revenged."

Philip Mara, knowing his life would certainly be taken, was sent out of Tipperary by the government; but the peasantry, true Arabs in revenge, then resolved to exterminate his kindred. His three brothers, all masons working at the new barrack, were doomed to death. The whole peasantry of Rath Common joined in the cruel league. No man, woman, or child who looked them in the face for weeks, but knew that they were shortly to be killed. On the 1st of October, 1827, the three brothers struck work about five o'clock, and descended from the scaffold to return homeward. Suddenly eight men rushed upon them, and fired a volley. The guns were old, and the volley did not take effect. Two of the brothers and an apprentice escaped in different directions, but Daniel Mara, the third brother, lost his presence of mind, and ran for shelter into the house of a poor widow. He was hotly pursued. One murderer got in after him through a small window; the seven others burst open the door, and savagely put him to a cruel death. This crime caused a greater sensation than even the death of Chadwick, and struck a deep terror through the length and breadth of Ireland. The government instantly offered a reward of two thousand pounds for the assassins; but of the hundreds of accomplices none would betray the eight murderers.

At last, through the personal exertions on the spot of Mr. Doherty, the solicitor-general, a highway robber named Fitzgerald, who was cast for death in the Clonmel jail, offered to furnish evidence to government if his own life was saved. Two men, named Patrick Lacy and John Walsh, were at once arrested, and on the 31st of March, 1828, tried at the Clonmel assizes for the murder of Daniel Mara.

The trial excited tremendous interest. Half the gentry of Tipperary thronged the court. A great crowd of peasantry gathered round the dock, and among them were dispersed a number of policemen, whose dark-green uniforms, high shakos, and keen glittering bayonets contrasted with the ragged grey frieze coats and cudgels of the country people. The governor of the jail stood on the witness-table, conspicuous with his ponderous keys. Mr. Justice Moor, in his red robes lined with black, looked grave as Rhadamanthus; and beside him sat the Earl of Kingston, whose dark and massive countenance and wild shaggy hair made him as conspicuous as the judge himself.

The prisoners, careless of the evidence of a mere "stag" or informer, always regarded by

juries with suspicion, remained firm and composed. Lacy was a tall handsome young man, with a good colour and a clear calm eye. He was dressed with extreme care, his white hands were loosely bound together. Walsh, a far more harmless man, was a sturdy, square-built fellow, with firm and rather a fierce look. The prisoners seemed to entertain little apprehension till Mr. Doherty suddenly rose, turned to the dock, shook his lifted hand, and called "Kate Costello."

This woman was the witness on whose reluctant evidence the whole case for the prosecution turned. The case up to her appearance stood thus: Fitzgerald and Lacy had been sent for from a distance by Paddy Grace's relatives to do "the job." The band was formed, and the ambuscade laid; but something defeating their plans, the murder was adjourned for another week. On Sunday, the 30th of September, another band of assassins was collected, and they met at the house of a farmer, named John Keogh, living near the barrack on which the Maras were at work; here they were waited on by Keogh's poor relation and servant, Kate Costello. On the morning of Monday, the 10th of October, the conspirators proceeded to a wooded hill, called "the grove," above the barracks, where their fire-arms had been hidden. There fresh men joined them, and Kate Costello brought them food and whisky. They remained hiding there till five o'clock, when it was announced that the Maras were coming down from the scaffolding and going home. The men then came down from the grove and murdered Daniel Mara, as we have seen. With their hands still red with an innocent man's blood, these ruffians went to the house of a respectable, orderly farmer, named John Russell. He gave the red-handed men welcome, and placed food before them. Mary Russell, his daughter, a delicate gentle girl, rushed up to them as they entered, and exclaimed with earnestness:

"Did you do any good?"

Peg Russell, an old crone, moping by the fireside, also roused herself, raised her shrivelled yellow hand, and cried with bitter querulousness:

"You might as well not have killed any, since you did not kill them all."

The first witness that leaped on the table was Fitzgerald, the robber, a fine athletic young man of about three-and-twenty. His black eyes were full of fire, and wore a watchful expression; his broad chest was almost bare; his muscular legs were bare about the knee. He proved a most methodical and exact witness, detailing his actions for a whole month with great accuracy. This man had been in the habit of robbing by night the very peasants, whose outrages he at other times put himself forward to redress. He entered farm-houses armed, and demanded board and lodging. By day he would often compel passing travellers to kneel down to him while he presented a musket at their heads. Yet with all this he was chivalrous in many things, and was a favourite with the peasantry. He was especially anxious to assure the spectators that he had not sold the cause for gold, but simply to save his own neck.

When Fitzgerald had finished, there was a great anxiety in the court about the appearance of Kate Costello. The friends of the prisoners began to believe "that she would never turn against her people;" but suddenly the door of the witness-room opened, and a little withered woman entered, and tottered to the table. Her hands were white and clammy; her eyes closed; her long black hair was dishevelled; and her head drooped on her shoulder. Her voice was an almost inarticulate whisper, and she almost swooned and could not be recovered till she was sprinkled with water. The rod used to identify prisoners was then put into her hands, and she was desired to turn to the dock, and to point out the murderers she had seen in the grove.

Walsh, one of the prisoners, instantly cried out: "O God, you're going to murder me entirely. I'll not stand here to be murdered, for I'm downright murdered. God help me!"

Walsh then, growing somewhat calmer, begged the judge to allow other prisoners to be put with him and Lacy in the dock, in order to test the witness more severely. The judge instantly acquiesced in this demand. The jail being at some distance, some time was lost in this delay, and during this time Kate Costello sank back in her chair apparently almost lifeless.

It was about four o'clock in the morning, and the candles were burning low in their sockets, when the band of prisoners entered the court, astonished and alarmed at the sudden summons. The only sound was the clank of the fetters and the grounding of the soldiers' brass bound muskets on the pavement. Again Kate Costello rose with the fatal index-rod in her hand. The face of Walsh was wrung with the intensest anxiety, and some women among the spectators exclaimed: "Oh Kate!"—a passionate adjuration that seemed to thrill her to the heart. It was not Walsh or Lacy that she cared for, but her own kinsmen, who were also accomplices, and shortly to be tried. She herself had been threatened with death unless she disclosed the truth. If she did disclose it, her life was also in peril. Terrible alternative! At last she advanced towards the dock, raised the trembling rod a second time, and laid it on the head of Walsh. To him it was the touch of death, and he showed that he felt he was lost. As she sank back in her chair, and dropped the rod, a deep murmur of horror and pity ran through the crowd, mingled with curses and stifled execrations from those in the background.

Walsh, who, while there was hope, had been convulsed with agitation, now became calm and composed as his landlord came forward and gave him a high character for integrity and good conduct. Both prisoners were at once found guilty.

Kate's relations, Patrick and John Keogh, were tried a few days after the execution of Lacy and Walsh. It was rumoured that John

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had been Kate's lover, and that, though he had deserted her, she would not take his life away or betray "her people." The Keoghs had been the chief planners and actors in the murder of Mara, with whom they had been intimate. They were dressed like respectable farmers. Patrick, the younger, wore a blue coat and white waistcoat, and a knotted black silk handkerchief round his neck; he was short and athletic, and had a determined expression of face. John, the elder, was a man of towering stature and broad shoulders. He was carelessly dressed, and his neck was bare. His blue eyes were mild and intelligent. The old grey-headed father of these prisoners sat on their left hand, his eyes glaring, his cheeks blanching, as the fate of the men became more and more certain, but for the whole sixteen hours of the trial he never uttered a word. This time Kate Costello's manner was entirely changed; she had taken the first step, and now she did not falter. She kept her quick shrewd eyes wide open and fixed upon the counsel, and she watched the cross-examination with a keen wary vigilance. She exhibited no compunction, and without apparent regret laid the rod on the heads of her relative and her lover. Early on Sunday morning the verdict of guilty was brought in. The prisoners, the day before blooming with health, were now white as shrouds. The judge told them that, as it was Easter Sunday, he should delay passing sentence.

The two unhappy men cried out, "A long day, a long day, my lord!" and begged that their bodies might be given to their father. As they made this pathetic request, they uttered the funeral wail, and swaying themselves up and down, threw back their heads and struck their breasts with their fingers half closed, in the manner used by Roman Catholics in saying the "Confiteor." Two friends then lifted the old man upon the witness-table so that he could approach the deck. He stretched out his arms towards John Keogh, who, leaning over the iron spikes to him full length, clasped his father long and closely to his bosom. The younger man's courage gave way at this, and the hot tears rained down his face. The judge then left the court, and the two prisoners were removed to the condemned cells. The old man was led home moaning through the stormy night to the miserable cellar where he lodged.

Old John Russell pleaded guilty at the bar, in the hope of saving his sons, lads of fifteen or sixteen. "Let them," he kept saying, "put me on the trap, if they like, but do let them spare the boys." These assizes lasted three weeks, nearly all the cases being connected with agrarian outrages. There was scarcely one example of a murder committed for mere gain.

It was at these same assizes, at which three hundred and eighty persons were tried, that one of the murderers of the Sheas was tried. This outrage was one of the most inhuman that ever took place in Ireland, and is still talked of in Tipperary with peculiar horror. The crime dated back to the year 1821. In November of that year, a respectable farmer, named Patrick Shea, who had lately turned out of his farm an under-tenant, named William Gorman, came to live in the house left vacant by the eviction. It was situated in a dark gloomy glen, at the foot of the misty and bleak mountain of Slievenamawn, and, on a clear day, it was just visible from the high road through the narrow defile of Glenbower.

On Saturday, the 18th of November, a man of evil character, named William Maher, came to a low shibbeen near the mountain, kept by a man and woman named Kelly, of infamous character. These people sold spirits without a licence, and their house was a well-known resort of bad characters of both sexes. Maher, who was the paramour of Kelly's wife, retired to a recess in the house (probably that used for secret distilling), and melting some lead, ran it into musket bullets. The woman, having heard the "boys" were going to inflict summary justice on the Sheas, for being so harsh to Gorman, whom they had driven out penniless, and without covert or shelter, and being sure Maher would be in the business, taxed him with it, and, having some good instincts left, besought him not to take away life. Maher answered with equivocations. The bullets were scarcely finished before a newly married servant of the Sheas, Catherine Mullaly, a cousin of Mary Kelly, came in. Maher, who knew Catherine, began bantering her in the Irish way, and the girl joined heart and soul in the repartees. Maher's aim was to discover if the Sheas' house, which was well garrisoned, contained any store of fire-arms.

The girl, pleased with his attentions, gradually disclosed to Maher the fact that the Sheas had a great many muskets and pistols, and when she left Maher put on her cloak for her, and bade her farewell as a friend. Mary Kelly, who knew the wretch better, the moment the door closed on Catherine, implored Maher whatever was done, not to harm that poor girl. He promised, and soon after quitted the house with the bullets, leaving Mary Kelly confident of the safety of Catherine. But, nevertheless, the next day her fears revived when she heard Maher and some mysterious whispering men, who dropped into the shibbeen that day after mass talking under breath.

Mary knew that "a word would have been as much as her life was worth," so she did not speak of it even to her husband; but on the Monday night, when he was asleep, stole out of bed, slipped on his coat, and made her way cautiously and slowly under the loose stone walls and hedges to the vicinity of Maher's house. She stopped, for she could hear voices. At length the door opened, and she hid herself behind some brambles as the murderers came out. They passed her, armed and in file; eight faces and eight voices she recognised. One of the eight carried two long lighted sods of turf which he kept alive by his breath. They did not see her, and passed on. Trembling and terror-stricken, but still magnetically drawn, she followed them from hedge to hedge, till they out-

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stripped her on the path to the Sheas' house From where she stood the farmhouse was visible. As she looked, a fire leaped out of the roof, ran over the thatch, and instantly rose into a pyramid of flame, for the wind was high that night; the whole glen grew crimson. The door was barricaded by the murderers. Not one of the Sheas escaped. Shrieks and cries for mercy rose from the seventeen burning wretches within. The conspirators yelled with laughter, whooped for joy, and discharged guns and blunderbusses to celebrate and announce their triumph. Then came a silence, and after that, when the wind abated for a moment, Mary Kelly could hear the deep groans of the dying, and low moans of agony, as the fire spread fiercer to complete its horrible task. At every fresh groan the monsters discharged their guns in fiendish jubilee.

A friend of the Sheas, named Phillip Hill, who lived on the opposite side of the hill adjoining the house, heard the guns echoing in Slievenamawn, and, arousing his friends, made across, if possible, to save the Sheas. These men arrived too late; nor did they dare to attack the murderers, who drew up at once to meet them. Philip Hill defied them to come on, but they declined his challenge, and waited the attack of the inferior number. All this while the groans from the burning house were growing fainter and fainter till at last they entirely subsided.

John Butler, a boy who had a brother in the Sheas' house, had accompanied Hill, and, eager to discover the murderers, approached nearer than the rest to the fire, and by its light recognised William Gorman. The murderers returned by the same way as they came, and were again observed by Mary Kelly from her hiding-place. The wretches as they passed her were rejoicing over their success, and William Gorman, with detestable and almost incredible inhumanity, was actually amusing the party by mimicking the groans of the dying, and mocking the agonies he and his comrades had inflicted.

The morning beginning to break, Mary Kelly, haggard and affrighted, returned home with her terrible secret; but she did not breathe a word either to her husband or her son, and the next day, when taken before a magistrate, denied all knowledge of the crime.

John Butler also went back to the house of his mother—an old woman—and, waking her, told her that her son had been burnt alive with all in the Sheas' house. The old woman uttered a wail of grief, but, instead of immediately proceeding to a magistrate, she enjoined her son not to ever disclose the secret, lest she and all their family should meet the same fate.

The next day, all that side the county gathered round the ruins. Mary Kelly was among them, and no doubt many of the murderers. The sight was a fearful one, even to those innocent of the crime. Of the roof only the charred rafters were left; the walls were gaping apart; the door was burned to its hinges, close by it lay sixteen corpses, piled together: those who were uppermost were burned to the very bones; those below were only partially consumed. The melted flesh had run from the carcases in black streams along the scorched floor. The first thought of all had been to run to the door.

Poor Catherine Mullaly's fate was the most horrible and most touching of all. In the midst of the flames she had been prematurely delivered of a child—that unhappy child, born only to instantly perish, was the eighteenth victim. In trying to save her child, she had placed it in a tub of water, where it was found, with the head burned away, but the body perfect. Near the tub lay the blackened body of the mother, her skeleton arm hanging over the water. The spectators beheld the sight with dismay, but they were afraid to speak. Some one whispered, sternly, "William Gorman is well revenged!" Many at first tried to argue that the fire had been an accidental one, as no Ribbonmen would, they said, have ever destroyed so many innocent people merely because they worked for the Sheas. This opinion gained ground among persons jealous of the national character, especially when no one came forward to obtain the large reward. At last, however, it was discovered that not only was the conflagration the result of an extensive plot, but that the whole population round Slievenamawn knew of the project and its execution.

For sixteen months Mary Kelly kept the secret. She did not dare to reproach Maher, who constantly visited her house, and yet she shuddered at his approach. Gradually her mind began to yield to the pressure. She became incapable of sleep, and used, in the dead of the night, to rise and wander over the glen, remaining by the black ruins of the Sheas' house till morning, and then returning, worn and weary, to her home. She believed herself pursued by the spectre of her unhappy kinswoman, and said, on the private examination before the trial, that she never lay down in her bed without thinking of the "burning," and fancying she saw Catherine Mullaly lying beside her holding her child, "as black as a coal," in her arms. At length conscience grew stronger and drove away fear. She revealed her secret in confession, and the priest, like a good and honest man, prevailed upon her to give instant information to Captain Despard, a justice of peace for the county of Tipperary.

It was not till 1827 that William Gorman was apprehended and put upon his trial. There is no doubt that Shea, the middleman, had been cruel and oppressive to Gorman, his under-tenant. He had retaliated upon him the severities of the superior landlord. Gorman had been distrained, sued in the superior courts, processed by civil bill, totally deprived of his farm, house, and garden, and then driven out, a disgraced beggar, to brood over vengeance.

A keen observer (we believe, the son of the celebrated Curran), who was present at this remarkable trial, has left a terrible picture of Gorman's appearance and manner as he stood at the Clonmel dock. "He was evidently," he says, "most anxious for the preservation of his life; yet the expression of anxiety which disturbed his ghastly features occasionally gave

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way to the exulting consciousness of his revenge. As he heard the narration of his own delinquencies, so far from exhibiting contrition or remorse, a savage joy flashed over his face; his eyes were lighted up with a fire as lurid as that he had kindled in the habitation of his enemies; his hand, which had previously quivered and manifested, in the peculiar movement of his fingers, the workings of deep anxiety, became for a moment clenched; and when the groans of his victims were described, his white teeth, which were unusually prominent, were bared to the gums; and though he had drained the cup of vengeance to the dregs, still he seemed to smack his lips and to lick the blood with which his injuries had been redressed."

Immediately after the conviction and execution of this monster, a large meeting of Roman Catholics was held at Clonmel to express horror at his crime, and to consider some means of removing the causes of such outrages. Mr. Sheil's speech to the peasantry produced an enormous sensation. "How deep a stain," he said, eloquently, "have these misdeeds left upon the character of your country! and what effort should not be made by every man of ordinary humanity to arrest the progress of villainy which is rolling in a torrent of blood, and bearing down all the restraints of law and morality. Look, for example, at the murder of the Sheas, and tell me if there be anything in the records of horror by which that accursed deed has been excelled, and say, you who know it best, you who are of the same sex as Catherine Mullaby, what must have been the throes with which she brought forth her unfortunate offspring, and felt her infant consumed by the fire with which she was surrounded. We can but lift up our hands to the God of justice and ask Him why He has invested us with the same forms as the demons who perpetrated that unexampled murder! And why did they commit it? By virtue of a horrible league by which they were associated together, not only against their enemy, but against human nature and the God who made it; for they were bound together, they were sworn in the name of their Creator, and they invoked Heaven to sanctify a deed which they confederated to perpetrate by a sacrament of hell."

At these same assizes, which seemed to epitomise almost all the crimes and miseries of poor Ireland, there were two other cases which still after so many years are often referred to in Tipperary. The first of these trials was that of a band of men who entered the house of a farmer named Barry, and killed him in his wife's arms. Barry had refused to surrender some land from which he had evicted one of the conspirators, and the league had agreed to take his life. The assassins broke into his house on the Sunday evening. The frantic wife, grasping one of the murderers, desired him to think "of God, and of the blessed night, and to spare the father of her eight children." The man himself offered to give up the disputed ground, tilled or untilled. They answered, with yells of ferocious irony, that "he should soon have ground enough," and plunged their bayonets simultaneously into his heart. Among the prisoners at the dock was a young stripling with the down still on his cheek, and a wild, haggard old man with a head covered with hoary and dishevelled hair.

The second trial was that of Matthew Hogan and three of his kinsmen, for the murder of one or two of the Hickeys, members of a rival clan. The Tipperary people at that time were too fond of taking the law into their own hands. If a man received a blow, he instantly lodged a complaint with his clan, who at once, over their egg-shells of whisky, entered into a solemn compact the next fair-day to avenge the insult. The other side spent the time in industriously forming a reactionary confederacy. The next fair-day, before the booths were well up, a Hogan would suddenly strike a Hickey, or a pot-valiant Hickey go trailing his coat defiantly and insultingly among the Hogans. Then up would go the blackthorns, and in two minutes the whole fair would be a whirl of battering sticks, and the air be dark with "two-year-olds," as clinkers and small square paving-stones are affectionately denominated in Ireland; the screaming women come also from under the low tents, with stones in stockings, ready to give a coup de grace to any man of the opposite side who fell, or to step behind a redoutable champion, perhaps at bay with his back against a wall, and fell him with a sudden side stroke.

In the particular case we cite there were five hundred men engaged, and several of the Hickey party were left dead on the field. Matthew Hogan, whose fate excited strong sympathy, is described as a tall athletic man, with a finely formed face totally free from any ferocity of expression. His landlord, who had a great regard for him, deposed to his being an honest, industrious farmer, of a mild and kindly nature. He had never taken part in any deeds of nocturnal crime, and was known as a gentle and humane person, and liked by every one with whom he came in contact.

He and his three kinsmen were all sentenced to transportation. When the sentence was passed, the colour fled from Hogan's cheeks, his lips became dry and ashy, his hands shook; but no tears rose into his eyes. His grief was too great for tears. As one of his own clan said:

"Hogan will feel it the more because he is so tinder."

He was a prosperous farmer, with a young wife and beautiful children. It was even proved that he had generously stayed his hand to save the life of an antagonist in the very hottest fury of the combat. But there was no respite for him. He was transported in spite of every effort of his friends.

Unhappy lawlessness of an unhappy age!

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"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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THE MOONSTONE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c. &c.

SECOND PERIOD. THE DISCOVERY OF THE TRUTH. (1848—1849.)

THIRD NARRATIVE.

THE NARRATIVE OF FRANKLIN BLAKE.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE not a word to say about my own sensations.

My impression is, that the shock inflicted on me completely suspended my thinking and feeling power. I certainly could not have known what I was about, when Betteredge joined me—for I have it on his authority that I laughed, when he asked what was the matter, and, putting the nightgown into his hands, told him to read the riddle for himself.

Of what was said between us on the beach, I have not the faintest recollection. The first place in which I can now see myself again plainly is the plantation of firs. Betteredge and I are walking back together to the house; and Betteredge is telling me that I shall be able to face it, and he will be able to face it, when we have had a glass of grog.

The scene shifts from the plantation, to Betteredge's little sitting-room. My resolution not to enter Rachel's house is forgotten. I feel gratefully the coolness and shadiness and quiet of the room. I drink the grog (a perfectly new luxury to me, at that time of day), which my good old friend mixes with icy-cool water from the well. Under any other circumstances, the drink would simply stupefy me. As things are, it strings up my nerves. I begin to "face it," as Betteredge has predicted. And Betteredge, on his side, begins to "face it," too.

The picture which I am now presenting of myself, will, I suspect, be thought a very strange one, to say the least of it. Placed in a situation which may, I think, be described as entirely without parallel, what is the first proceeding to which I resort? Do I seclude myself from all human society? Do I set my mind to analyse the abominable impossibility which, nevertheless, confronts me as an undeniable fact? Do I hurry back to London by the first train to consult the highest authorities, and to set a searching inquiry on foot immediately? No. I accept the shelter of a house which I had resolved never to degrade myself by entering again; and I sit, tippling spirits and water in the company of an old servant, at ten o'clock in the morning. Is this the conduct that might have been expected from a man placed in my horrible position? I can only answer, that the sight of old Betteredge's familiar face was an inexpressible comfort to me, and that the drinking of old Betteredge's grog helped me, as I believe nothing else would have helped me, in the state of complete bodily and mental prostration into which I had fallen. I can only offer this excuse for myself; and I can only admire that invariable preservation of dignity, and that strictly logical consistency of conduct which distinguish every man and woman who may read these lines, in every emergency of their lives from the cradle to the grave.

"Now, Mr. Franklin, there's one thing certain, at any rate," said Betteredge, throwing the nightgown down on the table between us, and pointing to it as if it was a living creature that could hear him. "*He's* a liar, to begin with."

This comforting view of the matter was not the view that presented itself to my mind.

"I am as innocent of all knowledge of having taken the Diamond as you are," I said. "But there is the witness against me! The paint on the nightgown, and the name on the nightgown are facts."

Betteredge lifted my glass, and put it persuasively into my hand.

"Facts?" he repeated. "Take a drop more grog, Mr. Franklin, and you'll get over the weakness of believing in facts! Foul play, sir!" he continued, dropping his voice confidentially. "That is how I read the riddle. Foul play, somewhere—and you and I must find it out. Was there nothing else in the tin case, when you put your hand into it?"

The question instantly reminded me of the letter in my pocket. I took it out, and opened it. It was a letter of many pages, closely written. I looked impatiently for the signature at the end. "Rosanna Spearman."

As I read the name, a sudden remembrance illuminated my mind, and a sudden suspicion rose out of the new light.

"Stop!" I exclaimed. "Rosanna Spearman came to my aunt out of a Reformatory? Rosanna Spearman had once been a thief?"

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"There's no denying that, Mr. Franklin. What of it now, if you please?"

"What of it now? How do we know she may not have stolen the Diamond after all? How do we know she may not have smeared my nightgown purposely with the paint ——?"

Betteredge laid his hand on my arm, and stopped me before I could say any more.

"You will be cleared of this, Mr. Franklin, beyond all doubt. But I hope you won't be cleared in *that* way. See what the letter says, sir. In justice to the girl's memory, see what the letter says."

I felt the earnestness with which he spoke—felt it almost as a rebuke to me. "You shall form your own judgment on her letter," I said, "I will read it out."

I began—and read these lines:

"Sir—I have something to own to you. A confession which means much misery, may sometimes be made in very few words. This confession can be made in three words. I love you."

The letter dropped from my hand. I looked at Betteredge. "In the name of Heaven," I said, "what does it mean?"

He seemed to shrink from answering the question.

"You and Limping Lucy were alone together this morning, sir," he said. "Did she say nothing about Rosanna Spearman?"

"She never even mentioned Rosanna Spearman's name."

"Please to go back to the letter, Mr. Franklin. I tell you plainly, I can't find it in my heart to distress you, after what you have had to bear already. Let her speak for herself sir. And get on with your grog. For your own sake, get on with your grog."

I resumed the reading of the letter.

"It would be very disgraceful to me to tell you this, if I was a living woman when you read it. I shall be dead and gone, sir, when you find my letter. It is that which makes me bold. Not even my grave will be left to tell of me. I may own the truth—with the quicksand waiting to hide me when the words are written.

"Besides, you will find your nightgown in my hiding-place, with the smear of the paint on it; and you will want to know how it came to be hidden by me? and why I said nothing to you about it in my life-time? I have only one reason to give. I did these strange things, because I loved you.

"I won't trouble you with much about myself, or my life, before you came to my lady's house. Lady Verinder took me out of a reformatory. I had gone to the reformatory from the prison. I was put in the prison, because I was a thief. I was a thief, because my mother went on the streets when I was quite a little girl. My mother went on the streets, because the gentleman who was my father deserted her. There is no need to tell such a common story as this, at any length. It is told quite often enough in the newspapers.

"Lady Verinder was very kind to me, and Mr. Betteredge was very kind to me. Those two, and the matron at the reformatory are the only good people I have ever met with in all my life. I might have got on in my place—not happily—but I might have got on, if you had not come visiting. I don't blame *you*, sir. It's my fault—all my fault.

"Do you remember when you came out on us from among the sandhills, that morning, looking for Mr. Betteredge? You were like a prince in a fairy-story. You were like a lover in a dream. You were the most adorable human creature I had ever seen. Something that felt like the happy life I had never led yet, leapt up in me the instant I set eyes on you. Don't laugh at this, if you can help it. Oh, if I could only make you feel how serious it is to *me!*

"I went back to the house, and wrote your name and mine in my work-box, and drew a true lovers' knot under them. Then, some devil—no, I ought to say some good angel—whispered to me, 'Go, and look in the glass.' The glass told me—never mind what. I was too foolish to take the warning. I went on getting fonder and fonder of you, just as if I was a lady in your own rank of life, and the most beautiful creature your eyes ever rested on. I tried—oh, dear, how I tried—to get you to look at me. If you had known how I used to cry at night with the misery and the mortification of your never taking any notice of me, you would have pitied me perhaps, and have given me a look now and then to live on.

"It would have been no very kind look, perhaps, if you had known how I hated Miss Rachel. I believe I found out you were in love with her, before you knew it yourself. She used to give you roses to wear in your button-hole. Ah, Mr. Franklin, you wore my roses oftener than either you or she thought! The only comfort I had at that time, was putting my rose secretly in your glass of water, in place of hers—and then throwing her rose away.

"If she had been really as pretty as you thought her, I might have borne it better. No; I believe I should have been more spiteful against her still. Suppose you put Miss Rachel into a servant's dress, and took her ornaments off——? I don't know what is the use of my writing in this way. It can't be denied that she had a bad figure; she was too thin. But who can tell what the men like? And young ladies may behave in a manner which would cost a servant her place. It's no business of mine. I can't expect you to read my letter, if I write it in this way. But it does stir one up to hear Miss Rachel called pretty, when one knows all the time that it's her dress does it, and her confidence in herself.

"Try not to lose patience with me, sir. I will get on as fast as I can to the time which is sure to interest you—the time when the Diamond was lost.

"But there is one thing which I have got it on my mind to tell you first.

"My life was not a very hard life to bear,

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while I was a thief. It was only when they had taught me at the reformatory to feel my own degradation, and to try for better things, that the days grew long and weary. Thoughts of the future forced themselves on me now. I felt the dreadful reproach that honest people—even the kindest of honest people—were to me in themselves. A heart-breaking sensation of loneliness kept with me, go where I might, and do what I might, and see what persons I might. It was my duty, I knew, to try and get on with my fellow-servants in my new place. Somehow, I couldn't make friends with them. They looked (or I thought they looked) as if they suspected what I had been. I don't regret, far from it, having been roused to make the effort to be a reformed woman—but, indeed, indeed it was a weary life. You had come across it like a beam of sunshine at first—and then you too failed me. I was mad enough to love you; and I couldn't even attract your notice. There was great misery—there really was great misery in that.

"Now I am coming to what I wanted to tell you. In those days of bitterness, I went two or three times, when it was my turn to go out, to my favourite place—the beach above the Shivering Sand. And I said to myself, 'I think it will end here. When I can bear it no longer, I think it will end here.' You will understand, sir, that the place had laid a kind of spell on me before you came. I had always had a notion that something would happen to me at the quicksand. But I had never looked at it, with the thought of its being the means of my making away with myself, till the time came of which I am now writing. Then I did think that here was a place which would end all my troubles for me in a moment or two—and hide me for ever afterwards.

"This is all I have to say about myself, reckoning from the morning when I first saw you, to the morning when the alarm was raised in the house that the Diamond was lost.

"I was so aggravated by the foolish talk among the women servants, all wondering who was to be suspected first; and I was so angry with you (knowing no better at that time) for the pains you took in hunting for the jewel, and sending for the police, that I kept as much as possible away by myself, until later in the day, when the officer from Frizinghall came to the house.

"Mr. Seegrave began, as you may remember, by setting a guard on the women's bedrooms; and the women all followed him up-stairs in a rage, to know what he meant by the insult he had put on them. I went with the rest, because if I had done anything different from the rest, Mr. Seegrave was the sort of man who would have suspected me directly. We found him in Miss Rachel's room. He told us he wouldn't have a lot of women there; and he pointed to the smear on the painted door, and said some of our petticoats had done the mischief, and sent us all down-stairs again.

"After leaving Miss Rachel's room, I stopped a moment on one of the landings, by myself, to see if I had got the paint-stain by any chance on *my* gown. Penelope Betteredge (the only one of the women with whom I was on friendly terms) passed, and noticed what I was about.

"'You needn't trouble yourself, Rosanna,' she said. 'The paint on Miss Rachel's door has been dry for hours. If Mr. Seegrave hadn't set a watch on our bedrooms, I might have told him as much. I don't know what *you* think—*I* was never so insulted before in my life!'

"Penelope was a hot-tempered girl. I quieted her, and brought her back to what she had said about the paint on the door having been dry for hours.

"'How do you know that?' I asked.

"'I was with Miss Rachel, and Mr. Franklin, all yesterday morning,' Penelope said, 'mixing the colours, while they finished the door. I heard Miss Rachel ask whether the door would be dry that evening, in time for the birthday company to see it. And Mr. Franklin shook his head, and said it wouldn't be dry in less than twelve hours. It was long past luncheon-time—it was three o'clock before they had done. What does your arithmetic say, Rosanna? Mine says the door was dry by three this morning.'

"'Did some of the ladies go up-stairs yesterday evening to see it?' I asked. 'I thought I heard Miss Rachel warning them to keep clear of the door.'

"'None of the ladies made the smear,' Penelope answered. 'I left Miss Rachel in bed at twelve last night. And I noticed the door, and there was nothing wrong with it then.'

"'Oughtn't you to mention this to Mr. Seegrave, Penelope?'

"'I wouldn't say a word to help Mr. Seegrave for anything that could be offered to me!'

"She went to her work, and I went to mine.

"My work, sir, was to make your bed, and to put your room tidy. It was the happiest hour I had in the whole day. I used to kiss the pillow on which your head had rested all night. No matter who has done it since, you have never had your clothes folded as nicely as I folded them for you. Of all the little knick-knacks in your dressing-case, there wasn't one that had so much as a speck on it. You never noticed it, any more than you noticed me. I beg your pardon; I am forgetting myself. I will make haste, and go on again.

"Well, I went in that morning to do my work in your room. There was your night-gown tossed across the bed, just as you had thrown it off. I took it up to fold it—and I saw the stain of the paint from Miss Rachel's door!

"I was so startled by the discovery that I ran out, with the nightgown in my hand, and made for the back stairs, and locked myself into my own room, to look at it in a place where nobody could intrude and interrupt me.

"As soon as I got my breath again, I called to mind my talk with Penelope, and I said to

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myself, 'Here's the proof that he was in Miss Rachel's sitting-room between twelve last night, and three this morning!'

"I shall not tell you in plain words what was the first suspicion that crossed my mind, when I had made that discovery. You would only be angry—and, if you were angry, you might tear my letter up and read no more of it.

"Let it be enough, if you please, to say only this. After thinking it over to the best of my ability, I made it out that the thing wasn't likely, for a reason that I will tell you. If you had been in Miss Rachel's sitting-room, at that time of night, with Miss Rachel's knowledge (and if you had been foolish enough to forget to take care of the wet door) *she* would have reminded you—*she* would never have let you carry away such a witness against her, as the witness I was looking at now! At the same time, I own I was not completely certain in my own mind that I had proved my own suspicion to be wrong. You will not have forgotten that I have owned to hating Miss Rachel. Try to think, if you can, that there was a little of that hatred in all this. It ended in my determining to keep the nightgown, and to wait, and watch, and see what use I might make of it. At that time, please to remember, not the ghost of an idea entered my head that *you* had stolen the Diamond."

There, I broke off in the reading of the letter for the second time.

I had read those portions of the miserable woman's confession which related to myself, with unaffected surprise, and, I can honestly add, with sincere distress. I had regretted, truly regretted, the aspersion which I had thoughtlessly cast on her memory, before I had seen a line of her letter. But when I had advanced as far as the passage which is quoted above, I own I felt my mind growing bitterer and bitterer against Rosanna Spearman as I went on. "Read the rest for yourself," I said, handing the letter to Betteredge across the table. "If there is anything in it that I *must* look at, you can tell me as you go on."

"I understand you, Mr. Franklin," he answered. "It's natural, sir, in *you*. And, God help us all!" he added, in a lower tone, "it's no less natural in *her*."

I proceed to copy the continuation of the letter from the original, in my own possession.

"Having determined to keep the nightgown, and to see what use my love, or my revenge (I hardly know which) could turn it to in the future, the next thing to discover was how to keep it without the risk of being found out.

"There was only one way—to make another nightgown exactly like it, before Saturday came, and brought the laundrywoman and her inventory to the house.

"I was afraid to put it off till the next day (the Friday); being in doubt lest some accident might happen in the interval. I determined to make the new nightgown on that same day (the Thursday), while I could count, if I played my cards properly, on having my time to myself. The first thing to do (after locking up your nightgown in my drawer) was to go back to your bedroom—not so much to put it to rights (Penelope would have done that for me, if I had asked her) as to find out whether you had smeared off any of the paint-stain from your nightgown, on the bed, or on any piece of furniture in the room.

"I examined everything narrowly, and, at last, I found a few faint streaks of the paint on the inside of your dressing-gown—not the linen dressing-gown you usually wore in that summer season, but a flannel dressing-gown which you had with you also. I suppose you felt chilly after walking to and fro in nothing but your night dress, and put on the warmest thing you could find. At any rate, there were the stains, just visible, on the inside of the dressing-gown. I easily got rid of these by scraping away the stuff of the flannel. This done, the only proof left against you was the proof locked up in my drawer.

"I had just finished your room when I was sent for to be questioned by Mr. Seegrave, along with the rest of the servants. Next came the examination of all our boxes. And then followed the most extraordinary event of the day—to *me*—since I had found the paint on your nightgown. It came out of the second questioning of Penelope Betteredge by Superintendent Seegrave.

"Penelope returned to us quite beside herself with rage at the manner in which Mr. Seegrave had treated her. He had hinted, beyond the possibility of mistaking him, that he suspected her of being the thief. We were all equally astonished at hearing this, and we all asked, Why?

"'Because the Diamond was in Miss Rachel's sitting-room,' Penelope answered. 'And because I was the last person in the sitting-room at night!'

"Almost before the words had left her lips, I remembered that another person had been in the sitting-room later than Penelope. That person was yourself. My head whirled round, and my thoughts were in dreadful confusion. In the midst of it all, something in my mind whispered to me that the smear on your nightgown might have a meaning entirely different to the meaning which I had given to it up to that time. 'If the last person who was in the room is the person to be suspected,' I thought to myself, 'the thief is not Penelope, but Mr. Franklin Blake!'

"In the case of any other gentleman, I believe I should have been ashamed of suspecting him of theft, almost as soon as the suspicion had passed through my mind.

"But the bare thought that YOU had let yourself down to my level, and that I, in possessing myself of your nightgown, had also possessed myself of the means of shielding you from being discovered, and disgraced for life—

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I say, sir, the bare thought of this seemed to open such a chance before me of winning your good will, that I passed blindfold, as one may say, from suspecting to believing. I made up my mind, on the spot, that you had shown yourself the busiest of anybody in fetching the police, as a blind to deceive us all; and that the hand which had taken Miss Rachel's jewel could by no possibility be any other hand than yours.

"The excitement of this new discovery of mine must, I think, have turned my head for a while. I felt such a devouring eagerness to see you—to try you with a word or two about the Diamond, and to *make* you look at me, and speak to me, in that way—that I put my hair tidy, and made myself as nice as I could, and went to you boldly in the library where I knew you were writing.

"You had left one of your rings up-stairs, which made as good an excuse for my intrusion as I could have desired. But, oh, sir! if you have ever loved, you will understand how it was that all my courage cooled, when I walked into the room, and found myself in your presence. And then, you looked up at me so coldly, and you thanked me for finding your ring in such an indifferent manner, that my knees trembled under me, and I felt as if I should drop on the floor at your feet. When you had thanked me, you looked back, if you remember, at your writing. I was so mortified at being treated in this way, that I plucked up spirit enough to speak. I said, 'This is a strange thing about the Diamond, sir.' And you looked up again, and said, 'Yes, it is!' You spoke civilly (I can't deny that); but still you kept a distance — a cruel distance between us. Believing, as I did, that you had got the lost Diamond hidden about you, while you were speaking, your coolness so provoked me that I got bold enough, in the heat of the moment, to give you a hint. I said, 'They will never find the Diamond, sir, will they? No! nor the person who took it—I'll answer for that.' I nodded, and smiled at you, as much as to say, 'I know!' *This* time, you looked up at me with something like interest in your eyes; and I felt that a few more words on your side and mine might bring out the truth. Just at that moment, Mr. Betteredge spoilt it all by coming to the door. I knew his footstep, and I also knew that it was against his rules for me to be in the library at that time of day—let alone being there along with you. I had only just time to get out of my own accord, before he could come in and tell me to go. I was angry and disappointed; but I was not entirely without hope for all that. The ice, you see, was broken between us—and I thought I would take care, on the next occasion, that Mr. Betteredge was out of the way.

"When I got back to the servants' hall, the bell was going for our dinner. Afternoon already! and the materials for making the new nightgown were still to be got! There was but one chance of getting them. I shammed ill at dinner; and so secured the whole of the interval from then till tea-time to my own use.

"What I was about, while the household believed me to be lying down in my own room; and how I spent the night, after shamming ill again at tea-time, and having been sent up to bed, there is no need to tell you. Sergeant Cuff discovered that much, if he discovered nothing more. And I can guess how. I was detected (though I kept my veil down) in the draper's shop at Frizinghall. There was a glass in front of me, at the counter where I was buying the longcloth; and—in that glass—I saw one of the shopmen point to my shoulder and whisper to another. At night again, when I was secretly at work, locked into my room, I heard the breathing of the women servants who suspected me, outside my door.

"It didn't matter then; it doesn't matter now. On the Friday morning, hours before Sergeant Cuff entered the house, there was the new nightgown—to make up your number in place of the nightgown that I had got—made, wrung out, dried, ironed, marked, and folded as the laundry woman folded all the others, safe in your drawer. There was no fear (if the linen in the house was examined) of the newness of the nightgown betraying me. All your underclothing had been renewed, when you came to our house—I suppose on your return home from foreign parts.

"The next thing was the arrival of Sergeant Cuff; and the next great surprise was the announcement of what *he* thought about the smear on the door.

"I had believed you to be guilty (as I have owned) more because I wanted you to be guilty than for any other reason. And now, the Sergeant had come round by a totally different way to the same conclusion as mine! And I had got the dress that was the only proof against you! And not a living creature knew it—yourself included! I am afraid to tell you how I felt when I called these things to mind—you would hate my memory for ever afterwards."

At that place, Betteredge looked up from the letter.

"Not a glimmer of light so far, Mr. Franklin," said the old man, taking off his heavy tortoiseshell spectacles, and pushing Rosanna Spearman's confession a little away from him. "Have you come to any conclusion, sir, in your own mind, while I have been reading?"

"Finish the letter first, Betteredge; there may be something to enlighten us at the end of it. I shall have a word or two to say to you after that."

"Very good, sir. I'll just rest my eyes, and then I'll go on again. In the meantime, Mr. Franklin—I don't want to hurry you—but would you mind telling me, in one word, whether you see your way out of this dreadful mess yet?"

"I see my way back to London," I said, "to consult Mr. Bruff. If he can't help me——"

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"Yes, sir?"

"And if the Sergeant won't leave his retirement at Dorking——"

"He won't, Mr. Franklin!"

"Then, Betteredge—as far as I can see now—I am at the end of my resources. After Mr. Bruff and the Sergeant, I don't know of a living creature who can be of the slightest use to me."

As the words passed my lips, some person outside knocked at the door of the room.

Betteredge looked surprised as well as annoyed by the interruption.

"Come in," he called out, irritably, "whoever you are!"

The door opened, and there entered to us, quietly, the most remarkable-looking man I had ever seen. Judging him by his figure and his movements, he was still young. Judging him by his face, and comparing him with Betteredge, he looked the elder of the two. His complexion was of a gipsy darkness; his fleshless cheeks had fallen into deep hollows, over which the bone projected like a penthouse. His nose presented the fine shape and modelling so often found among the ancient people of the East, so seldom visible among the newer races of the West. His forehead rose high and straight from the brow. His marks and wrinkles were innumerable. From this strange face, eyes, stranger still, of the softest brown—eyes dreamy and mournful, and deeply sunk in their orbits—looked out at you, and (in my case, at least) took your attention captive at their will. Add to this a quantity of thick closely-curling hair, which, by some freak of Nature, had lost its colour in the most startlingly partial and capricious manner. Over the top of his head it was still of the deep black which was its natural colour. Round the sides of his head—without the slightest gradation of grey to break the force of the extraordinary contrast—it had turned completely white. The line between the two colours preserved no sort of regularity. At one place, the white hair ran up into the black; at another, the black hair ran down into the white. I looked at the man with a curiosity which, I am ashamed to say, I found it quite impossible to control. His soft brown eyes looked back at me gently; and he met my involuntary rudeness in staring at him, with an apology which I was conscious that I had not deserved.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "I had no idea that Mr. Betteredge was engaged." He took a slip of paper from his pocket, and handed it to Betteredge. "The list for next week," he said. His eyes just rested on me again—and he left the room as quietly as he had entered it.

"Who is that?" I asked.

"Mr. Candy's assistant," said Betteredge. "By-the-bye, Mr. Franklin, you will be sorry to hear that the little doctor has never recovered that illness he caught, going home from the birthday dinner. He's pretty well in health; but he lost his memory in the fever, and he has never recovered more than the wreck of it since. The work all falls on his assistant. Not much of it now, except among the poor. *They* can't help themselves, you know. *They* must put up with the man with the piebald hair, and the gipsy complexion—or they would get no doctoring at all."

"You don't seem to like him, Betteredge?"

"Nobody likes him, sir."

"Why is he so unpopular?"

"Well, Mr. Franklin, his appearance is against him, to begin with. And then there's a story that Mr. Candy took him with a very doubtful character. Nobody knows who he is—and he hasn't a friend in the place. How can you expect one to like him, after that?"

"Quite impossible, of course! May I ask what he wanted with you, when he gave you that bit of paper?"

"Only to bring me the weekly list of the sick people about here, sir, who stand in need of a little wine. My lady always had a regular distribution of good sound port and sherry among the infirm poor; and Miss Rachel wishes the custom to be kept up. Times have changed! times have changed! I remember when Mr. Candy himself brought the list to my mistress. Now it's Mr. Candy's assistant who brings the list to me. I'll go on with the letter, if you will allow me, sir," said Betteredge, drawing Rosanna Spearman's confession back to him. "It isn't lively reading, I grant you. But, there! it keeps me from getting sour with thinking of the past." He put on his spectacles, and wagged his head gloomily. "There's a bottom of good sense, Mr. Franklin, in our conduct to our mothers, when they first start us on the journey of life. We are all of us more or less unwilling to be brought into the world. And we are all of us right."

Mr. Candy's assistant had produced too strong an impression on me to be immediately dismissed from my thoughts. I passed over the last unanswerable utterance of the Betteredge philosophy; and returned to the subject of the man with the piebald hair.

"What is his name?" I asked.

"As ugly a name as need be," Betteredge answered, gruffly. "Ezra Jennings."

AGUE AND ITS CAUSE.

THAT of fen places comes malaria, and that of malaria comes ague, the world has long known. It is only very lately that science has made the great step of discovering why this is. In the early ages men attributed the effects of malaria to the anger of the gods. The poetic fancy of the Greek idealised our marsh demon in the Python killed by Apollo, and the many-headed Hydra of the German swamp destroyed by Hercules. Varro and others of his time watching the effects of malaria in and around Rome (as one may do to this day), ascribed marsh fevers to the presence in the air of "innumerable hordes of imperceptible insects which, leaving the marshes, enter the body in

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respiration." Wiser men than they have been much further from the truth.

When I practised medicine in the fens, I was struck by the fact—as doubtless many others have been—that whenever any of the damp black earth is turned up, whether in cutting "turfs" or dykes, or otherwise left exposed to dry in the sun, it becomes covered with a distinct white or greyish film. On asking what this was, I was told that it was the efflorescence of the salts of the soil. Examination under the microscope satisfied me that it was not, but being at the time a young and unpractised microscopist, I did not guess what it was, further than that it consisted of a congeries of simple nucleated cells. In January, 1866, Dr. Salisbury, an American physician of note, published, in the American Journal of Science, a most interesting detail of elaborate experiments upon this subject. Thereby at last the real nature of malaria seems to have been ascertained.

The fertile source of desolation and disease consists of incalculable myriads of microscopic cells suspended in the atmosphere over waste, marshy, and fen districts. They are minute oblong cells, single or aggregated, and have a distinct nucleus with a very clear interspace, apparently empty, between it and the cell wall. They are of an algoid type, strongly resembling the palmella, and are consequently among the lowest organisms known to us. Sometimes several of these cells, or spores, are contained in an outer cell wall or delicate investing membrane to form a plant. Of these "ague plants" is formed that film on the soil to which I have alluded; and their spores or minute seeds—germinating cells—rise into the air carrying pestilence with them. These spores may, I believe, always be found in the expectoration of people who have really been seized with ague.

There are several species of the "ague plant," which has been called, from the Greek for earth and the word miasma, Gemiasma. There are a whiter and a yellowish green variety, occurring usually on a non-calcareous soil, and producing agues of but slight intensity. To the best of my knowledge the white is the only variety with which we are now afflicted in England; what other species the fen men of old time, who had but an aguish time of it, suffered from when "slimy things did crawl with legs" on the quaking morass, when the coot, and bittern, and plaintive sedge-bird hovered around Whittlesea Mere, and patches of primeval forest still stood on the steaming ground, nobody knows, and nobody ever will know. There are also a red, a green, and a lead-coloured variety, and one singular species the "Gemiasma protuberans," which has larger spores than the others, and consists of groups of jelly-like protuberances. These latter kinds habitually occur on rich calcareous soils, and produce fevers of a dangerous and congestive character. These cells with their spores produce visible incrustations or moulds upon the surface of recently exposed marsh. The red species causes the soil to appear as if sprinkled with fine brick-dust; while of the whiter a familiar instance occurs in the mildewed appearance of freshly disturbed fen earth.

The danger from these growths is greatest in a hot dry season following a wet one. The wetter the season and the hotter, the better is it for malaria; the worse for man. In India, it is during the extreme heat, immediately after the rains have ceased, that it is most deadly. At this time the poison is so intense in some districts that whole tracts of land are deserted. In Bishop Heber's Narrative of a Journey through the Upper Provinces of India, speaking of the vast forests of the Terrai, he says: "Not the monkey only, but everything that has the breath of life, instinctively deserts them from the beginning of April to the end of October. The tigers go up to the hills, and the antelopes and wild hogs make incursions into the plain; and those persons, such as dák bearers and military officers who are obliged to traverse the forest in the intervening months, agree that not so much as a bird can be heard or seen in all the frightful solitude." He also speaks of having noticed a dense white mist brooding in the hollows of the jungle, which the natives call "essence of owl." This fact I shall advert to again. An example, showing that decaying vegetation has nothing whatever to do with the production of the fungoid marsh poison, but only the alternation of moisture and heat acting usually on a peculiar soil, I take from a paper by Dr. Ferguson, On the Nature and History of the Marsh Poison, in the Edinburgh Philosophical Transactions. "In 1809 several regiments of our army in Spain took up an encampment in a hilly ravine, which had lately been a watercourse. Pools of water still remained here and there among the rocks, so pure that the soldiers were anxious to bivouac near them for the sake of using the water. Several of the men were seized with violent intermittent fever before they could move from the bivouac the next morning.

"After the battle of Talavera, the English army retreated along the course of the Guadiana river, into the plains of Estremadura. The country was so dry for want of rain, that the Guadiana itself, and all the smaller streams had in fact ceased to be streams, and were no more than lines of detached pools in the courses that had formerly been rivers. The troops there suffered from intermittent fevers of such malignity that the enemy, and all Europe believed that the British host was extirpated."

In England, we know comparatively little of this wide-spread pestilence, which desolates so considerable a part of the earth's surface. Formerly, agues were common and dangerous even here. Both James the First and Cromwell died of agues *caught in London:* and it is only within a few years past that our fen counties became as healthy as they are now.

Our marsh demon is the veritable "pestilence that walketh in darkness." It seems

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almost certain that the poison, the spore of the "ague-plant," only rises into the atmosphere with the evening dews. Microscopically tested the day air is free from these organisms. Two labourers, A and B, shall traverse the same fen district, both in an equal state of health; but A shall go through it in the day, and B in the night when the mist is rising. A returns home, eats his pork and onion with a relish, and smokes his post-prandial pipe with much contentment. But malaria seizes on B, makes his throat sore, and causes his limbs to ache. He yawns and shivers, and comes home wretched and ill.

All fenny districts that are not intensely malarial, are comparatively harmless in the day time, and hurtful only when the innumerable spores of the "ague plants," that cling throughout the day to the soil, rise at night, and are suspended in the cold vapours which hover over the surface of such regions. But in all malarious districts, to sleep at night in the open air is almost to ensure an attack of the disease. It is a fact notorious to seamen that when off a malarious coast, the sailors can go on shore during the day with impunity, but not at night. Here is an instance recorded by Dr. Lind, an old navy surgeon. In 1766, H.M.S. Phœnix was returning from the coast of Guinea. Both officers and men were perfectly healthy until they touched at the Island of St. Thomas. Nearly all went on shore, but sixteen of the crew remained several nights on the island. Every one of the sixteen was seized by the disorder, and thirteen of them died. The rest of the crew, two hundred and eighty in number, who went on shore at intervals, but who were never there during the night, entirely escaped sickness. The reapers in the Campo Morto—ominously, but aptly, named part of the Maremma—are allowed to sleep for two hours at noon. This they do without danger. But it is quite another thing when the evening dews are falling on the earth that forms their bed. It is then that the poisonous mist wraps them in its deadly winding-sheet. Those who travel through the Pontine marshes, ought always to do so by day, if they have a wholesome fear of the marsh demon before their eyes. "In such countries," as Sir Thomas Watson racily says, "'Early to bed' is always a good and wholesome rule, but the other half of the proverb, 'Early to rise,' becomes a most unsafe precept," that is, if early rising implies leaving the house early. People may (and do) become seasoned to malaria; become so inured to it that it no longer produces its specific effects upon them; but they pay dearly for their seasoning in the degenerated physique and dull incapable mind that usually characterises the inhabitant of a malarious district. In the fens of Cambridgeshire, immense quantities of alcohol and opium are taken by the inhabitants to correct the depressing tendency of the atmosphere.

In different parts of the world these cryptogamic spores rise in the night mists to different but definite heights. In Ohio, Dr. Salisbury says they seldom rise above from thirty-five to sixty-five feet above the low levels. In England they do not rise more than from fifteen to thirty feet. The spores and cells are found throughout these vapours, but do not extend above them; and they occur in the greatest abundance in their upper strata. Three men, dwellers in aguish places, shall live at different elevations; one, down in the marsh, on the low level; one, on the hill side, thirty or forty feet above; the third, fifty feet higher than either. Some autumn evening all three issue out and sit at the doors of their respective huts. The mist rises from the marsh. In due time the one living at the lowest level is taken very ill, the one living next above him is taken very much worse, while the third, whose house is highest, suffers nothing, until in an evil moment he goes down by night to look after his neighbours, and then he too is laid by the heels.

It has long been known that a certain elevation gives a sure immunity from intermittents; and in the neighbourhood of the Pontine marshes we see the villages perched curiously on the intervening hills. Near the city of Lancaster, U.S., resided a certain Mr. and Mrs. C. Their house was on the edge of a low terrace and elevated about thirty feet from the marshy soil around it; there called "the prairie bottom." About the middle of August, workmen were excavating in this marshy soil. The workmen soon began to fall with the ague; at last nearly all were attacked. On September 1, Mr. C. was seized with it, and on September 3, Mrs. C. likewise. The children all remained quite well. On examining the excavation, the recently disturbed soil was found covered with "ague plants." Mr. C. stated that he and his wife slept in a room on the lower floor, usually with their windows open; while their children, seven in number, slept in the second floor over their own room. He also stated that early every morning he noticed that "the fog" from the excavation ground extended towards the house, rose about two-thirds of the way up the first story, and freely entered the window of his room, but he had never noticed it to rise as high as the room where his children slept. "The fog" dissipated very early in the morning before the children were up. He had lived there forty years and none of his family had had ague before. This shows how precisely the height to which the poisonous mist rises may sometimes be estimated.

Intermittent fever or ague has actually been intentionally produced in the bodies of men by causing them to inhale the spores of these algæ, unknown to themselves; the men experimented on were exposed to no possible source of ague, but the one devised specially for them.

Dr. Salisbury tells how he unintentionally victimised one of his friends. After exhibiting a large piece of soil covered with the plants of the gemiasma to his class during lecture, he placed it under a table in the office of his friend Dr. House. It was loosely covered with a

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newspaper, and forgotten. In a few days the doctor suffered from a well-marked paroxysm of ague.

It has long been known that malaria is movable by the wind; and this is quite in accordance with what we now know of its nature. The spores of the "ague plants," having risen and become entangled in the mist, spores, mist and all, are blown along together far, perhaps, from the place where they originated. This fact admits of considerable practical application, especially in tropical countries, where the wind usually blows for a long time from the same quarter. This, too, explains the apparent exceptions to the rule, that malaria never rises above the ground. It is easy to see how a volume of fog or vapour, laden with its deadly burden of poison cells, may roll up and hang suspended on the side of a hill, towards which a wind blows from or across an adjacent marsh. Instances, indeed, have occurred where the poisonous vapour has been blown over a hill, and deposited on the other side of it, to the unmitigated disgust of the inhabitants, who fondly imagined themselves secure from the visits of their pestilent neighbour. Lancisi tells how thirty ladies and gentlemen sailed to Ostia, at the Tiber's mouth, on a mediæval picnic. All went gloriously as a pic-nic should, until suddenly the breeze shifted to the south, and began to blow over a marshy tract of land to windward of them, at a time when they were running very close in shore. Twenty-nine of the thirty were at once taken down with ague. The one man who escaped had to finish his part in the day's pleasure with sole charge of the navigation of a boat-load of fever patients.

The poison of malaria cannot extend its influence over even a narrow surface of water. I have already given one instance in the quotation from Dr. Lind. Here is another, from Sir Gilbert Blane. Speaking of the disastrous Walcheren expedition, when intermittents decimated the troops on shore, he says, "Not only the crews of the ships in Flushing roads were entirely free from the endemic, but also the guard-ships which were stationed in the narrow channel between Walcheren and Beveland. The width of this channel is about six thousand feet, yet, though some of the ships lay much nearer to one shore than to the other, there was no instance of any of the men or officers being taken ill with the same disorder as that with which the troops were affected." It is very possible, nay, probable, that the vapour and its poisonous contents are absorbed by the water over which it passes; and if it be so, we shall need no longer to seek an explanation of the fact that water in some places and at various times apparently induces the fever when drunk. Merely the drawing of a moat around a house in a poisonous locality is often an effectual safeguard.

Another remarkable peculiarity of the marsh poison is its attraction towards, or adherence to, the foliage of large leafy trees. A belt of trees round a house in a malarious district affords considerable protection; but it is dangerous in such places to go under the trees: much more dangerous to sleep under them. A friend of mine who lately owned a large plantation in Berbice, tells me that New Amsterdam, in that district, is situated to the leeward of a vast and swampy forest. The town lies right in the track of a trade wind that blows over it through the forest, leaving with it the putrid scent of the marsh. Intermittent is unknown. It is, however, an understood fact that to go into the forest after nightfall, would be almost inevitably fatal; also, that to cut down the trees would be to compel the evacuation of the town.

Ague was once considered by some people a preservative of health. Sir Thomas Watson tells how Dr. James Sims, a London physician, felt convinced, at the beginning of his last illness, that he should get well if he could but catch an ague. So down he went into the fens, ague-hunting; but after a time he returned, bitterly complaining that the country was spoiled by draining, and that there were no agues to catch. Louis the Eleventh, who had more piety—as times went—than brains, prayed to the Lady of Selles that in the plenitude of her grace she would confer upon him a quartan ague. The notion of engaging one disorder to drive out another is so far from being itself absurd, that—to say nothing of vaccination—it is a part of the groundwork of the whole practice of medicine. The chief purpose in giving physic is to produce one unnatural condition more or less inconsistent with the permanence of some other unhealthy condition which is held to be more dangerous or troublesome.

The fact that the spores of the gemiasma produce ague, is not by any means the only instance in which disease has been traced to a fungoid origin. At a recent meeting of the Pathological Society (March 3rd) Mr Simon stated on behalf of Dr. Hallier, of Jena, that he had probably discovered the origin of typhus, small-pox, and four other diseases, in peculiar and definite fungi developed in the blood. It was Dr. Hallier, also, who last year supposed the proximate cause of cholera to be of this nature, and also, with all reason and demonstration of experiment to confirm his opinion, attributed it to the Arocystis occulta, a fungus analogous to that producing "the blight" in rice. Dr. Flint finds that a fungus peculiar to straw will induce a genuine attack of the measles, though he does not at present insist that the straw fungus is the only source of that complaint. Hay asthma is caused, I believe, invariably by the inhalation of the spores of a fungus produced during the fermentation of hay in the process of drying. Dr. Salisbury has a paper in the current number of the American Journal of Science, on the fungoid origin of two other important diseases. The pollen and volatile principles of many actively flowering plants produce a sensible and sometimes very severe impression even where insensibly inhaled. In passing through a field of flowering hops, of lettuce, of poppies, of spotted hemlock, of

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tobacco, or stramonium, or near a plant of rhus vernix, the poison ivy, symptoms peculiar to the action of each plant are soon produced.

A DEBT OF HONOUR.

Desiring to record in this Journal, in the plainest and simplest manner possible, certain words publicly spoken by its Conductor on a recent occasion, we present the following extract from the latest-published copies of American Notes, and Martin Chuzzlewit. It is entitled,

"Postscript.

"At a public dinner given to me on Saturday the 18th of April, 1868, in the City of New York, by two hundred representatives of the Press of the United States of America, I made the following observations among others:

"'So much of my voice has lately been heard in the land, that I might have been contented with troubling you no further from my present standing-point, were it not a duty with which I henceforth charge myself, not only here but on every suitable occasion, whatsoever and wheresoever, to express my high and grateful sense of my second reception in America, and to bear my honest testimony to the national generosity and magnanimity. Also, to declare how astounded I have been by the amazing changes I have seen around me on every side, changes moral, changes physical, changes in the amount of land subdued and peopled, changes in the rise of vast new cities, changes in the growth of older cities almost out of recognition, changes in the graces and amenities of life, changes in the Press, without whose advancement no advancement can take place anywhere. Nor am I, believe me, so arrogant as to suppose that in five-and-twenty years there have been no changes in me, and that I had nothing to learn and no extreme impressions to correct when I was here first. And this brings me to a point on which I have, ever since I landed in the United States last November, observed a strict silence, though sometimes tempted to break it, but in reference to which I will, with your good leave, take you into my confidence now. Even the Press, being human, may be occasionally mistaken or misinformed, and I rather think that I have in one or two rare instances observed its information to be not strictly accurate with reference to myself. Indeed, I have, now and again, been more surprised by printed news that I have read of myself, than by any printed news that I have ever read in my present state of existence. Thus, the vigour and perseverance with which I have for some months past been collecting materials for, and hammering away at, a new book on America has much astonished me; seeing that all that time my declaration has been perfectly well known to my publishers on both sides of the Atlantic, that no consideration on earth would induce me to write one. But what I have intended, what I have resolved upon (and this is the confidence I seek to place in you) is, on my return to England in my own person, in my own Journal, to bear, for the behoof of my countrymen, such testimony to the gigantic changes in this country as I have hinted at to-night. Also, to record that wherever I have been, in the smallest places equally with the largest, I have been received with unsurpassable politeness, delicacy, sweet temper, hospitality, consideration, and with unsurpassable respect for the privacy daily enforced upon me by the nature of my avocation here and the state of my health. This testimony, so long as I live, and so long as my descendants have any legal right in my books, I shall cause to be republished, as an appendix to every copy of those two books of mine in which I have referred to America. And this I will do and cause to be done, not in mere love and thankfulness, but because I regard it as an act of plain justice and honour.'

"I said these words with the greatest earnestness that I could lay upon them, and I repeat them in print with equal earnestness. So long as this book shall last, I hope that they will form a part of it, and will be fairly read as inseparable from my experiences and impressions of America.

"Charles Dickens.

"May, 1868."

TWO TIPS.

Although not a betting man, and notwithstanding the fact of my having spent upwards of twenty years in the East, I have, like every other Englishman, always taken an interest in our great national feast day—the day on which we celebrate the festival of St. Derby. The first commemoration of this annual holiday that I can recollect was, I think, in 1828 or '29. I was taken to Epsom, and although I do not remember any particulars connected with the event, I recollect perfectly that the winner was a horse called The Colonel, belonging to Mr. Petre, uncle of the present peer of that name. The last Derby I saw was some forty years later, in 1867, when Hermit showed in front so unexpectedly, and his owner netted a fortune. I went to India the year Bay Middleton won the blue ribbon of the turf. I heard of the Running Rein and Leander scandal at the Cape of Good Hope, and I got back to England just in time to see Merry Monarch run off with the great prize, and to hear the trial, Orlando *versus* Running Rein, connected with the turf fraud of the previous year, in which no less than four barristers, who are now judges (Messrs. Cockburn, Lush, Kelly, and Martin), and one (Thesiger) who has been Lord Chancellor, were counsel on one side or the other.

Connected with Merry Monarch's year (1845) a curious incident befell a near relative of mine, who was in those days a very wild subaltern in a crack cavalry corps, but is now an officer of standing and rank in the army. We were

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coming out of the Army and Navy Club on the night before the race, when a shabby-genteel looking man asked us for charity, saying he had not the wherewith to pay for a night's lodging. My companion gave the man a shilling, and stopped to ask him some questions about himself. It turned out that this now homeless being had once been an officer in the army, but had been ruined in health, pocket, and reputation by gambling and drink. He told his tale with considerable shame, but without making any excuse for himself, and the interview ended by my relation giving him a sovereign and telling him to call on him two days later, when he would try if something could not be done in the way of permanently assisting him.

The next morning we started for Epsom. About an hour before the race was to be run, as I was wandering about amongst the carriages, I was touched on the arm by the same man who had begged of us in Piccadilly the night before. He lifted his hat as respectfully as a groom would have done, and asked me whether I was a betting man, "because if you are, sir, and will follow my advice at once, you may make any fortune you like to name." I replied that I had neither money nor head for betting, but that my companion, who had given him the sovereign the night before, had a heavy book on the race. "Well, sir," the man went on, "find out your friend at once, and tell him to take all the odds he can get against Merry Monarch. The horse is now at a hundred to one. Everybody believes that he is not intended to win, and that his owner, Mr. Gratwicke, will merely start him to make the running for his other horse, Doleful. But I know for a fact that if Merry Monarch once gets fairly off, they can't help his winning." The man was so persistent, that I consented to go and look for my relative, and soon found him in the betting-ring. At first, he laughed at my credulity, but was at last persuaded to risk a hundred pounds on the horse. The odds against Merry Monarch being at one hundred to one, in laying out one hundred pounds, my relation stood a chance of winning ten thousand. In half an hour the horses had started, Merry Monarch was in first at the finish, and instead of being a loser, my relation was a net winner of eight thousand pounds. But strange to say, we never saw the shabby man again. We put several advertisements in the Times and other papers, stating that if the person who spoke to two gentlemen in Piccadilly the night before the Derby, and who the next day gave them some good advice about the winning horse on the Downs, would call or write to such an address, he would hear something very much to his advantage. These advertisements were inserted from time to time for nearly a year, but not a word did we ever get in reply to them.

I had gone back to India, had remained there seven or eight years, had served in the Crimea, had been through a great part of the Indian mutiny, and had at last sold out of the army, married, and settled down. My relative had risen in the service, and was on the staff at Corfu, where I went out to pass part of the winter of 1859-60 with him. We then joined in a yacht voyage to the coast of Syria. By the time we reached Beyrout we must have been at least a month behindhand in European news. Accordingly we sent up our compliments to Mr. Moore, then the obliging consul-general in Syria, and asked him if he could lend us any newspapers. Mr. Moore at once sent us down a number of Galignanis, and two dozen copies of the Times, apologising at the same time that the latter were so old.

It has always been a habit of mine to read what is called the agony column of the Times. Following my habit, I was dreamily conning over that column of a paper at least two months old, when I came upon the following advertisement:

IF THIS SHOULD MEET THE EYE of the gentleman who ON THE EVE OF THE DERBY IN 1845 gave a beggar in Piccadilly a sovereign, and who followed that beggar's advice about BACKING MERRY MONARCH, he is requested to communicate by letter with R. H., at Messrs. Lincoln and Sons, Solicitors, 101, Gray's Inn, London.

My relation felt certain that at last it would be in his power to help a man who had put so much money into his pocket. He wrote at once to the address named.

But, as betting-men say, the boot was on the other leg. Our old pauper acquaintance, instead of wanting to ask charity, was hoping to confer another favour upon those who had saved him from starvation on the eve of the Derby in 1845. When we got to Malta we found a long letter waiting for us from Richard Hutchins, Esq., of Halse Hall, Hants—for such was his present style and address. It appeared that the day after the race he actually went to Lane's Hotel to call on my relative, but finding that he was not yet up went away, intending to call again later. But the paper of the day, contained an advertisement from a gentleman, who intended to travel and trade in the Dutch East Indies, wanting a clerk who could read, write, and speak the language of that country, as well as French and English. Richard Hutchins happened to know both Dutch and French as well as he knew his own tongue. He applied immediately for the place; and although he had no reference to give, got the situation at once, and in twenty-four hours was on his way to his destination. To provide what was requisite in the way of outfit, his new master advanced him twenty pounds, so that he had no need to ask help from any one. The salary he got was liberal, his expenses were very small indeed, and about 1852—just at the time when the gold-digging mania had broken out in Australia—he was enabled to emigrate to that colony, taking with him some five or six hundred pounds of savings, which he invested in building-lots in and about Melbourne. Most persons have heard how property of this sort increased eighty and a hundred fold in a few months.

The purchases made by Hutchins were so judiciously selected, that he was able in half a dozen years to realise a large fortune, with which he had come home and bought an estate in his own country. On my return to England I went down to see him, at his earnest request, and found him living the life of a country gentleman, much respected in his neighbourhood, and with an income of some two thousand five hundred to three thousand pounds a year. His object in advertising had been to see whether my relation was in want of money, and if so, to give him a thousand pounds to put himself right in the world. I often see Mr. Hutchins, either at his own place or in London, and he frequently talks of the time when he begged his bread from us at the corner of Piccadilly.

Now for another reminiscence.

When the Derby of 1844 was about to be run, there were two horses in the race between which it was said to be a certainty. These were Leander and Running Rein. Both were suspected of being more than three years old, and by degrees betting men became sure that some treachery had been at work, and both horses, although allowed to start, did so under protest. The late Lord George Bentinck and General (then Colonel) Peel, in common with every judge of a horse who had seen these animals, felt certain that they were both four years old, and consequently had no business to run in a three-year-old race. Just before the race Running Rein lashed out behind, and caught Leander on the knee, which was smashed so completely that the brute had to be shot there and then. Having thus rid himself of the only really dangerous foe, Running Rein won the race in a canter, the second horse being Colonel Peel's Orlando. The colonel determined to try the case in a court of law, and towards the latter end of 1844, the celebrated trial of Orlando versus Running Rein was heard before the late Baron Alderson, in Westminster Hall. Here it was proved beyond doubt that Running Rein was in reality a horse called Maccabeus; that he was foaled in 1840, and that the swindle had been concocted and carried out by a certain Mr. Abraham Levi Goodman, who, with his confederates, had hoped by this robbery to make a profit of some fifty thousand pounds. This was the trial in which Messrs. Cockburn, Lush, Martin, and Kelly, besides the present Lord Chelmsford, were engaged as counsel. The second horse, Orlando, was declared to be the winner of the stakes.

Two days after the race was run, a friend of mine, who had laid the odds against Running Rein, and who firmly believed he had lost his money, was accosted in the Regent-street Quadrant by a Jew boy, who put into his hands a very dirty note, and then bolted down Air-street. The epistle was folded without being put in an envelope, and in it was written in a very schoolboy-like hand:

Honored Sur,—You oncest did me and my missus a good turn, and i vant to doo you the same, runing rene is an impostur, an he vont get the derby staks, bets must go vith staks. I noes all and I meen peeching; by all the bets on orlando as you kan and you will make a fortin, no more at present from your servant,

A. Simmons,
formerly your helper at Crick.

At first my friend thought this a hoax, but after a time he remembered that some two years previously, when he made Crick his head-quarters, in order to be near at hand to hunt in "the shires," he had a stable-helper called Simmons, and that on one occasion, when an execution for rent was put in the cottage of this man, he had at the cost of five pounds saved him from ruin. He had since heard that the man had taken service in a racing stable at Northampton, and putting these facts together, he had come to the conclusion that there might be knowledge as well as good intention in the advice he had received. On going down to "The Corner" (as Tattersall's was familiarly called, before it was moved from Grosvenor-place to Albert Gate) that afternoon, he heard that the doubts about Running Rein's identity were being gradually removed, and that it was not unlikely Orlando would, after all, be declared the winner of the Derby. Acting upon this information, he bought, or caused to be bought up, all the bets in favour of the second horse. Orlando had stood at five to one just before the race was run, and by an investment of some four thousand pounds, my friend stood to win twenty thousand pounds if Running Rein was declared to be an impostor. He determined to go as far as he had money to help him, and found he could buy up the bets at a very moderate rate. In less than a week he had laid out his money on what he very rightly considered a certainty, and by the time the Law Courts had come to a decision, even allowing for a few bad debts, he had realised rather better than eighteen thousand pounds on the event of the Derby for 1844.

It is a curious circumstance that "the blue ribbon of the turf" (a name given to the great Derby prize by Mr. Disraeli, I believe, when in 1848 he tried to console Lord George Bentinck for Surplice having won the race just after Lord George had sold the horse) has in modern days never fallen to the lot of any of our great statesmen, although at least three have tried for it, and of these three, two did so again and again. Lord Palmerston thought he had a very fair chance with Mainstone; Lord Derby is said to have made winning the race that bears his name the great object of his life at one time, and, like Lord George Bentinck, spared neither time, nor money, nor care to achieve his end. But all in vain. It seems that parliamentary, or ministerial, and turf honours are not to be won by the same person in these realms. Lord George Bentinck's was a particularly hard case. As he acknowledged himself, he had been trying all his life to win the Derby, but had failed. And when at last, in order to devote all his energies to his legis-

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lative duties, he sold off his stud, one of the horses which he had just parted with, the famous Surplice, won the very next Derby.

LEAVES FROM THE MAHOGANY TREE.

CONCERNING PIES.

COLUMBUS discovered a world—granted; but what is Columbus to the man who first made a pie? That *was* a man—that was creative genius, if you like. That man, that pieman, left behind him a boundless legacy of good to future ages. Millions of people are to-day moulding pies with all the relish of expectant appetite, and how melancholy to think that not one of the motley millions knows the name of the dead benefactor! We should like, for our own part, to build a city, and adorn it; in the grand square, an obelisk to the immortal founder of the pie; in the chief park, an equestrian statue to the poet who devised turtle soup; on the chief crescent, a trophy to the fabricator of the first cutlet. Every street should be called after a famous dish or sauce. Your slayers of mankind, your clever taxers, your shrewd place-hunters, your cringing courtiers, your incompetent monarchs, should have no monuments in our city. But we would immortalise the great cooks, the captains who circumnavigated the world to bring home to our firesides new dishes.

Two pies loom large out of the dimness of our past experiences. They were and will always be historical pies to us. The first of these was a goose pie; it came either from Yorkshire or Durham. It was a Titanic pie. It was beautiful to look at, and its seasoning was inspiration. It was a huge tomb of a pie, with brown figures exquisite in design (so ran our boyish mind) as the frieze of the Elgin marbles. On the raised lid, baked flowers and fruit were displayed, and the brownest flower of the nosegay served as a handle to open the pie. Within, coiled up and sleeping in concentric folds, lay all the eatable animals of Noah's Ark:—so it seemed to our hungry and excited vision. Day after day we came upon fresh strata, differing in tint and taste, yet all embedded in a transparent jelly which only genius could have fused into such a mould. What a conglomerate it was! The mere catalogue of the contents of that pie would be a small volume. It was an edible Chinese puzzle. There were, first and foremost, two young twin green geese (removed in the very April time of their sweet youth), one innocent tucked inside the other—folded, as it were, in the arms of his bigger brother—and both embalmed in salt, pepper, mace, allspice, and an ambery agglutination of jelly. They were boneless; for so the learned embalmers had wisely willed it. Then, in a snug and stately corner, lay a savoury turkey, brooding over a duck, a fowl, and a small covey of partridges, mingling and interchanging flavours. After a whole month's devotion to this pie, breaking into a bin of forcemeat with fine flavour of fresh herbs, we dug out (after much labour and research) the rosy tongue of some unknown animal. Somewhat later, a hare rewarded our exertions, hidden in a retired nook where it had secreted itself with the well-known cunning of that timid but delicious creature. That pie was as full of pleasant and strange surprises as Caliban's island was full of "sweet sounds" that gave delight and harmed not.

The second pie was a pigeon pie—a mere tartlet to the Yorkshire or Durham giant. It was an innocent little simple pie, of pigeons, with three stiff legs sticking up in the centre of the outer crust in a combined suicidal manner, or like the stalks of an extinct bouquet. It was a quiet sombre London Sunday morning when the pie began to be cooked in the oven of the nearest baker. We were just through the dark lane of a long fever, and we were weak, faint, nervous, restless. The family went to church. The bells ceased. The house grew deadly quiet. Just then hunger fairly set in and grew every moment more exacting in its demands. The leaden-footed hours—how they crawled as we sat there starving at the window! But we still remember our delight when the street at the church end began to darken with coats and brighten with ribbons. Presently the glum law stationer, opposite at Number Seven, returned home with his respectably miserable family, opened his door and went in, and then we heard the well-known family voices, and heard our knocker go; and then the pie—the pie—arrived from the baker's.

There is an old west country proverb that "the Devil never ventures west of the Tamar, for fear he should be put into a pie." There is, indeed, some warrant for this quaint proverb, for Devonshire people, either from an innate fondness for pie, or from a stolid and reckless English dislike to the trouble of cooking, have a tendency to put everything under crust. Ling, conger, shrimps, lobster, rooks, pilchard, leeks, oysters, turnips, parsley, potatoes—they are all inurned under the same roof of crust, and are all indiscriminately devoured. Of all the west country pies, squab pie is, in our humble estimation, the most incongruous and the most detestable. The odious composition is made of fat clumsy mutton chops, embedded in layers of sliced apples, shredded onions, and—O tempora! O mores!—brown sugar! The result is nausea, unsociability, and, in course of time, hatred of the whole human race. The greasy sugary, oniony taste is associated, in our mind, with the detested name of Bideford.

Of the fish pies of Cornwall and Devon, what can we say that is encouraging or satisfactory? Ling is a sickly unwholesome-looking fish, like a consumptive cod, and can never thrive—in or out of a pie. Cod is too dry and tasteless for a pie. Pilchard pie, mixed with leeks and filled up with scalded cream, announces its own horrors. Oyster pie, however, intermingled with slices of

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sweetbread, and the faintest and most ethereal seasoning of salt, pepper, and mace, is a dish for the gods, painful to dwell upon when not on hand to refer to. Eel pie needs no eulogium. To us the eel pie is like the May bough and the cowslips. It recals the brightest scenes of youth.

And now, by due sequence, we come to the emperor of pies, the Roi des Rois, le brave des braves, the Perigord pie. If Montepulciano be the king of Italian wines, as Redi has laid down in his jovial bacchanalian poem, the glorious pie of Perigord, the treasure-house of good things, is the potentate of all possible pies, as the haggis, according to Burns, is "the great chieftain of the pudding race." Into it are crowded all the choicest things of the sky, earth, and ocean. The very making of it is a pleasure. We revel over every item of the recipe. What an amusement for a wet day in the country!

You make a minced forcemeat of green truffles, and a little delicate cutting of basil, thyme, and knotted marjoram—rarest herbs of the garden. To these you add woodcocks' liver, a little fat bacon, a few currants, the flesh of a wild fowl, some pepper, and some salt Then lard, with spikes of bacon, the breasts of two pheasants, two partridges, two woodcocks, and some moor game, divide the backs, sever the legs and wings, and place a whole pheasant, boned, in the centre. These are to be seasoned with white pepper, a little Jamaica pepper, salt, and mace. To receive these spoils of earth and air, construct a sarcophagus of classic form and of thick raised crust. Line this soft chest with slices of fine fat bacon. Pave it with stuffing, and on this pleasant bed lay the game with a light and loving hand, intermingled with whole green truffles fresh from the cool earth and lately routed out by the sagacious truffle-hunter's dog. If you crowd and squeeze them, too greedy for mere quantity, remember Perigord will boast one good pie the less. Spread over all soft carpets of white unctuous bacon, and inurn the whole under a thick crust. It must be baked with calmness and deliberation, for it takes a long time ripening in the oven.

The venison pasty of Mrs. Rundell and Soyer is, no doubt, to the pasty of Robin Hood and his wild men what the potato is to the peach, or the man who does the mackerel on the pavement to the divine Raphael of Urbino. That muscular creature the deer, not having natural fat enough about him, has to be supplemented by the fat of a loin of mutton soaked a whole day in port wine and vinegar in which rape seed has been steeped. The meat (previously rubbed with sugar, to give it shortness and flavour), has to be so cut up and distributed with its postscript of fat, so that the carver may find it without breaking up the pavement of the whole pie, or crushing in the roof. The dish must be strewn with pepper, salt, and butter, and inundated with half a pint of good gravy. And ladies, ye at least who love your lords, remember the golden rule, that, as in our paté de Perigord, too close packing makes the meat under do; so, in this venison pasty, too loose packing makes the meat hard at the edges. It would be pleasant to eat such a pasty, with more hot gravy added through a funnel on its arrival steaming sweetly from the oven, under the feathery boughs of forest beech-trees in May time, got up in buff boots and green tunic, and to toss off malvoisie, and sing about the "merry greenwood," and the throstle, and the mavis, and merry men are we, and all the rest of it; but then the crust would probably be as heavy as lead under such circumstances, and the thing would never answer.

Let us turn to pies of a more feminine character—the pies of the orchard and of the garden. Our first recollection of fruit tarts is associated with our first visit to the country, when as boys we were pressed into the housekeeper's service and sent out into a long green thicket of a garden. There, first seeing fruit alive upon the tree, blooming and glowing with the life blood in its veins, we remember fancying ourselves in the garden of Eden, the housekeeper's very little daughter (ætat. twelve) our incomparable Eve. There, forgetful of the hours and careless of the hot widening sunshine, singing like twin wrens on the same bough of apple blossom; flowers at our feet, flowers around us, flowers above our heads, we sat on three-legged stools under the currant trees and stripped off the little beads of ruby and garnet, of white coral and of black blood colour, chattering all sorts of nonsense from fairy books. How white and vapouring the clouds when they every moment changed their shapes. How green and tender the grass on the lawn with the daisies and gold cups floating up to the surface like the fragments of gold leaf in Dantzic water. We remember with the keenness of yesterday our first impressions of the various flavours, the soft negative white currant, the sharp or more acid red, and that indescribable quality of the black, the dry stems and leaves of which are impregnated with the smell of the fruit. Then we had again (under supervision) to divest the fruit of their barren stalks, and our crowning delight was to see them piled round the tea-cup and roofed in from our gaze under a dome of paste. The blended flavour of the red currant and the velvetty raspberry struck our boyish fancy as superlatively happy, the warm raspberry striking perfume through the juicier currants, while a libation of mellow cream over the whole made a dish fit for Olympus. The black currant tart, too, had a rougher charm of its own. The fruit, swollen in the baking, yielded so generous a flood of crimson black juice that we children dyed ourselves with it, lips and hands, into the semblance of ensanguined blackamoors.

Cherry picking was another delight, increased by the danger of falling from steps and ladders. What pleasure to reach up to the large shining jewels! Blackhearts or bigaroons, some bitten

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and punctured, and bleeding from the golden dagger-point of the blackbird's bill, others cleft to the very stones by the blue jay's beak. Then came the apricot picking, each orange-velvet fruit—freckled here and there with red, like the cheek of a country girl—had to be lifted from its stem with the tender care with which one lifts precious stones in and out of their white satin case. To see the presiding goddess in her stately way dismember these apricots, remove the clean nutmeg-coloured stone (not with the rosy windings of the coarser peach stone) and prepare them for preserving, by snowy dustings of white sugar was a special treat to us young epicures.

A curious old cookery book of 1710, written by one Patrick Lamb, fifty years a master cook to royalty, and who in his time had cooked for Charles the Second, James the Second, King William, and Queen Anne, contains one or two receipts for pies and tarts, which are interesting, as showing the culinary fashions of the seventeenth century. Mr. Patrick Lamb's cowslip tart may not be familiar to some of our readers, although the tart is mentioned by incomparable Mrs. Randell. We have never tasted it, and presume it to be a mere culinary fantasy, with a pretty April name, which is ingratiating and full of the golden age. Mr. Lamb says, as if wishing to begin by giving his cook maid a holiday morning in the fields:

"Take the blossoms of a gallon of cowslips, mince them exceedingly small and beat them in a mortar; put to them a handful or two of grated Naples biskit, and about a pint and a half of cream; boil them a little over the fire, then take them off, and beat them in eight eggs with a little cream; if it does not thicken, put it over again, till it doth; take heed that it doth not curdle. Season with sugar, rose water, and a little salt; bake it in a dish or little open tartlet. It is best to let your cream be cold before you stir in the eggs.

Mr. Lamb's book contains a pretty series of pies arranged according to the months which they specially become. For January, oyster pie; for February, spring pie; for March, skerret pie; for April, buttered apple pie; for May, oringado pie; for June, humble pie (he shall eat humble pie—the inferior part of venison—a woodman's proverb); for July, potato pie; for August, cream tart; for September, lumber pie; for October, artichoke pie; for November, quince pie; for December, steak pie.

Delightful way of recording the changes of a year! Almost as good as an epicurean wine tour, once planned by our friend Professor Dreikopf. We were to begin with Rome and march straight from there on Montepulciano; thence, we were to take ship for Sicily, and examine the sites of the old Roman vintages. Germany would come next, we touching at each Rhenish town to taste its varieties of hock. Then came the claret, and the Burgundy, a delicious episode in champagne. Spain followed Greece, and we were to wind up with a bottle of Lacrymæ Christi on the edge of the crater of Vesuvius.

THE IMPOSTOR MÈGE.

A CERTAIN dervish once confided to a certain caliph that he (the dervish) had acquired the secret of throwing his own soul or spirit into any inanimate creature, thereby restoring it to life; and that, although by so doing his own body would become vacant and lifeless, he could, nevertheless, return to it at pleasure.

The caliph, incredulous, pointed to a dog that had just expired, and told him to throw his spirit into that. The dervish at once accepted the challenge, stretched himself at full length on the grass, and, after muttering sundry spells, to all appearance breathed his last. Instantly, the dead dog revived, and, running to the caliph, caressed him with such intelligence, and performed such singular feats at word of command, that there could remain no reasonable doubt of his being vivified by a human soul. As soon as the caliph was fully convinced, the dog in turn lay down and died, and the dervish's body returned to life.

The caliph insisted on knowing this wonderful secret, and on being himself able to perform the feat. The dervish stoutly refused at the outset; but, after great persuasion, yielded, as a proof of his devoted and disinterested friendship.

The caliph, we may guess, was not very long in putting his newly acquired faculty to the test. The dog once more was resuscitated, the caliph's body being, for the time, an unoccupied tenement. But it soon revived; too soon, in fact, for its owner's liking. The dervish took possession of it, and expressed his intention of keeping it. The poor caliph, therefore, forced to make his choice whether he would be a dog or a dervish, after reflection chose the latter; in which capacity he had the mortification of seeing his substitute coolly enter his palace and enjoy his privileges.

Strange as it may be, within quite recent times (historically speaking), men have succeeded in doing what the dervish did. The instance we are about to relate, is a modern case of stepping into a dead man's shoes.

At Manosque, a small town in the ancient province of Provence, there lived, about 1660, one Scipion Le Brun de Castellane, Seigneur of Caille and of Rougon. He had married, in 1655, the Demoiselle Judith le Gouche, of a good family belonging to the bar. Both husband and wife were Calvinists.

In 1685, Louis the Fifteenth, having revoked the Edict of 1598, called the Edict of Nantes, which granted tolerance and safe places of residence to Protestants, Le Brun de Castellane, like many other of his unfortunate countrymen, driven from his native land by Catholic intolerance, went and settled in Lausanne, Switzerland. The exiled family of the De

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Cailles (the name they mostly went by) at that time consisted of five persons—Le Brun de Castellane, Sieur de Caille, his mother, his son, and two daughters. He had lost his wife, Judith le Gouche, six years previously, as well as two sons who had died in their infancy. Isaac, the eldest and only surviving son, was twenty-one years of age when they all left France. They were accompanied in their emigration by a Protestant minister, Bernard, young De Caille's tutor, as well as by several domestics.

In December, 1689, Louis the Fourteenth completed his work of intolerance by an edict of spoliation, which made over to their nearest relations the property of the Calvinist émigrés. At that date the De Caille family included only four members, one of the daughters having died in 1686. A few months after the edict of spoliation, the grandmother also died.

Amongst the relations of the De Cailles who remained in Provence, preferring the abjuration of their faith to exile, four presented themselves to claim what their nearest kin had been stripped of. Their names should be remembered, both because they all played a part in subsequent events, and because they were not all actuated by motives of mere selfishness. They were the Dame Rolland, born Anne le Gouche, own sister to the late Dame de Caille, and wife of a Sieur Rolland, Avocat-Général to the Parlement of Dauphiné—she was therefore aunt to young Isaac de Caille; a Dame Tardivi, related to the Sieur de Caille, the wife of a king's counsel at the Court of Grasse (a town not far distant from Manosque); a Sieur Jean Pousset, of Cadenet; and a Sieur de Muges. This last pretended to represent a trustee on behalf of the rights of the exiled family.

A decree of the Parlement of Provenca, dated June 30th, 1680, nonsuited De Muges, adjudged to the Dame Tardivi for the greater part, and to Pousset for the rest, the property coming from the father's side, amounting to an income of about twelve thousand livres (francs) a year—in those days a considerable sum—and assigning to the Dame Rolland the maternal property, valued at two thousand five hundred livres per annum.

On the 15th of February, 1696, Isaac de Caille, Sieur de Rougon, Le Brun de Castellane's last surviving son, died at Vevay of a maladie de langueur—a general weakness or wasting away. The unhappy father, after being thus deprived of the last hope of seeing his name continued, acquainted his relations in Provence with his sad bereavement. The Dame Rolland, who, awaiting better times for her nephew, had taken care of his little property, now disposed of it, in favour of the poor inmates of the Charité of Manosque. The deed of gift, dated December 5th, 1698, which gratified that community with the Sieur de Caille's residence and an annual income of eight hundred livres, assigned the Sieur de Caille de Rougon's death as her motive for doing so.

Let us now pass on to the month of March, 1699, at which time M. de Vauvray, intendant of the navy at Toulon, was waited on by a certain Abbé Renoux, accompanied by an individual whose appearance was by no means prepossessing. This latter professed to be the son of the Sieur de Caille, and related the following story: His father, the Sieur de Caille, having taken an aversion to him in consequence of his inaptitude for study, and especially for his inclination to the Catholic religion, had ill treated him to such an extent that he was obliged to run away from the paternal mansion. Brought back to Lausanne repeatedly, by friends or relations of the family, he nevertheless contrived to effect his escape, in consequence of which he was kept so close a prisoner, night and day, that, but for a servant-maid's assistance, he would never have been able to break loose from captivity. On that occasion, his father being asleep, he took forty louis d'or from his pocket, and ran away as fast as his legs could carry him.

Feeling constantly a strong desire to enter into the true religion, he, De Caille, junior—this individual added—resolved to go to Provence. On his way there, he had been first arrested by Savoyard soldiers, and compelled to enlist, and was then taken prisoner by a French corps, commanded by M. de Catinat. Presented to the maréchal as the young De Caille, he stated his intentions, told his adventures, and received from him a passport for France.

"Once arrived at Nice," the individual continued, "I engaged in the militia of Provence. One day, when on guard at the governor's house, I saw a maître d'hôtel carrying a silver bowl engraved with the arms of my family, which my father had been obliged to sell, together with the rest of his plate, in order to cover the expenses of our flight to Switzerland. The remembrance of that sad event afflicted me sorely. I was unable to restrain my tears; and as they inquired the cause of my grief, 'I have good reason for sorrow,' I replied, showing my seal, on which the same arms were engraved. The Chevalier de la Fare, then in command at Nice, hearing of the incident, sent for me, and made me tell my story. From that day, he treated me with distinction."

M. de Vauvray, interested in the adventure, put a few questions to this supposed young De Caille. He inquired, for instance, what motive had induced to make such a mystery of his real name and position ever since his arrival in Provence. For, from the Nice affair up to the present time, there was a gap in young De Caille's history. His explanation was that, wishing to revisit his native town, he had gone secretly to Manosque, where one of his nurses had recognised him; but that, knowing the severity of the laws, and not yet having abjured Protestantism, he was afraid of being taken for a Huguenot spy. His desire of embracing the Catholic religion, which grew stronger and stronger every day, was the sole cause which induced him to open his mouth.

From all this, M. de Vauvray could make out one thing clearly—namely, that here was an opportunity of gaining a convert. Now,

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conversions were favourably looked on at court. The Jesuits, who guided the individual's movements, loudly claimed the honour of bringing this lost sheep back to the fold; and they crammed him so well with religious instruction, that five weeks after his appearance on the scene they pronounced him fit to abjure his errors. The ceremony took place in Toulon cathedral, on the 10th of April, 1699, the Grand-Vicaire officiating.

Several details of this act require to be noticed. By it, young De Caille took the names of André d'Entrevergues, son of Scipion d'Entrevergues, Sieur de Caille, and of the late Dame *Suzanne de Caille*, and gave his age as *twenty-three*. Now, De Caille the father called himself Le Brun de Castellane, Seigneur de Caille and *de Rougon*, and had never in any public act taken the name of d'Entrevergues, although he had the right to do so; and his wife, the Demoiselle *Judith Le Goucke*, had never assumed her husband's name, which would have been contrary to the manners of the day. Moreover, we know that, in 1699, young De Caille would have been thirty-five instead of twenty-three years of age.

The imposture was glaring; but no one at the time took the trouble to see through it. Only M. de Vauvray, who witnessed the act of abjuration, was greatly astonished to hear young De Caille declare that he could not write! He more than suspected they had been taken in. But the Jesuits were so proud of their acquisition that he did not care to disturb their triumph. In the then excited state of religious passions, the abjuration made a great noise: so much noise that the news soon reached Lausanne.

M. de Caille was thunderstruck on learning that his son, who had died three years ago in Switzerland, had lately been renouncing his heresy in Provence. He lost no time in informing M. de Vauvray, though the Dame Rolland, that some adventurer must have assumed his name for dishonest purposes; and he supported his statement by a legal certificate proving that his son had died in Switzerland on the 15th of February, 1696. He also entered a formal protest, by letter of attorney, against the imposture.

M. de Vauvray, whose eyes were already opened, did not wait for a second application from the injured father. He ordered the impostor to be arrested; and, that step taken, one would have said that the whole matter would soon come to an end. But the false De Caille was a soldier in the Marine, under the superior orders of M. d'Infreville, who commanded all the troops at Toulon. Conflict between M. d'Infreville and M. de Vauvray. The dispute had to be referred to the court. M. de Pontchartrain, minister of state, mentioned the affair to the king, who, on the 11th of June, ordered the impostor to the Arsenal (where the galley-slaves are), and to be handed over to the judge ordinary, to be tried in the regular way—which was done forthwith. On the 19th of June the false De Caille was examined for the first time, at his own request.

The interrogatory is full of plain proofs of imposture. When pressed about the difference in the names in his own declarations and the documents received from Switzerland, he replied that he had never exactly known his own real name; that his father had always given him that of D'Entrevergues de Rougon de Caille; that he believed he was twenty-five years of age (previously he had said twenty-three); that he had never known his mother's maiden name; that he never knew who were his godfather and godmother; that he was ten years old when they left Manosque! Every answer betrayed a singular ignorance of the antecedents of the person whom he pretended to represent.

How had it happened that, born in the upper ranks of society, he could neither read nor write? It was the fault of his eyes, which were weak from his birth. Of the name of the street, and even of the quarter in which the paternal mansion was situated in Manosque, he could give no indication. What were its interior arrangements? He knew nothing about them; though he could give a very correct description of its outside appearance. How many children had his father? He answered, three. What was his father like? He described him as having black hair and beard and a brown complexion; whereas M. de Caille had light brown hair, a red beard, and a white face. Certainly, the débutant had studied his part very imperfectly.

Nevertheless, the Marine (as he is henceforth called in the trial), at the close of his examination, applied to the lieutenant-criminel of Toulon to be set at liberty and put in possession of his property. However ignorant he might be of the most essential facts, he showed no symptoms of fear or embarrassment. He himself caused the result of his examination to be signified to the Dame Rolland, to the Sieurs Tardivi and Consorts (Jean Pousset), and even to relations of the Sieur de Caille, who had no interest in the exile's property.

The Dame Rolland protested, and declared her intention to pursue the impostor in a criminal court. An ordonnance of the lieutenant-criminel (16th September, 1699) decided that the Marine should be taken to Manosque and elsewhere, to be confronted with whoever would recognise or disavow him; and he himself urged that that measure should be put in execution. M. Rolland appealed on behalf of his wife, and obtained leave to lay an information against the Marine for assuming a name which belonged to another person, and to prove that the pretended De Caille, the son, was no other than one Pierre Mège, the son of a galley-slave, well known in Provence for twenty years past. In fact, there were people who, without the slightest hesitation, recognised, in the false De Caille, this same Pierre Mège, of Marseilles, who had been enrolled at Toulon in the body of the Marines.

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It is now time to state how Pierre Mège, alias Sans-Regret, conceived the strange idea of personating young De Caille.

One day he happened to be sipping his chopine of wine in a dark corner of a public-house in Toulon, when there entered three men whose patois told him they were natives of Upper Provence—that they came from Forcalquier and Manosque. One of them, who had only just come from home to sell little alabaster images in Toulon, treated the others to gossip about their relations and friends. The De Cailles, before the Revocation of the Edict, had been the great folk of the neighbourhood. Once so rich and powerful, now poor and in exile, their misfortunes furnished an endless theme. They talked of the ancient château of the De Cailles, a seigneurial residence falling to ruins; of the death of Isaac, the last surviving son; of the deed of gift made by the Dame Rolland to the Charité of Manosque; and of the considerable fortune which must one day revert to the Le Gouches and the Rollands at the death of the last of the Lausanne exiles.

When the trio rose to depart, Mège accosted them and said, "You were speaking just now of Isaac de Caille, who seems to have died in Switzerland. Have any of you seen him? Would you know him again?"

"No," replied a Manoscain; "but we have at Toulon the carpenter, La Violette, from the same place, who knew the whole family well, and who certainly would know young De Caille again, if by chance he were not dead."

"Much obliged, messieurs. When you see La Violette, tell him to favour me with a call. If he ask in the port for Sans-Regret, the Marine, he will have no difficulty in finding me out. I may, perhaps, be able to communicate something that will be to his profit as well as to his pleasure."

A few days afterwards, the carpenter went to see Sans-Regret, who (according to his own subsequent account), received him with, "How are you, La Violette? Don't you recollect me?"

To which the carpenter replied, "You are the son of my former master."

What really passed between the two men cannot be told with any certainty; neither of them had an interest in confessing the truth. But what is certain is, that shortly afterwards the Marine, Pierre Mège, alias Sans-Regret, the carpenter La Violette, and De Muges the trustee's relation, made common cause; that La Violette assisted the Marine in his first advances to M. de Vauvray; and that their testimony was the first that was given in proof of the Marine's identity with Isaac de Caille.

When the Marine, during his examination, was charged with being Pierre Mège in reality, he was not disconcerted in the least; frankly avowing at once that he had borne that name, which, however, was not his own. He explained that it had happened thus:

After the Nice adventure, he was obliged to live somehow, while waiting for a favourable opportunity of claiming his real name, De Caille. The militia having been disbanded, he betook himself to Marseilles with an empty purse. No sooner had he arrived there, than he fell in with a certain Honorade Venelle, the wife of one Pierre Mège, who was living with her mother and her two sisters-in-law. The husband was absent; the wife remiss in her conjugal duties. All those women, moreover, had been brought up in the reformed religion, which they had abjured only through fear and constraint. It was a further tie between them and the Marine. He confessed to them the secret of his birth, and his desire to regain his rightful position; they advised him to conceal his name and his faith a little longer; and, to make things pleasant, Honorade consented that he should pass for her absent husband—for Pierre Mège.

This tale was a calumny on poor Honorade, who was *not* unfaithful to an absent spouse, seeing that the Marine, then present, was the injured husband, Pierre Mège himself in the flesh.

To continue our worthy hero's story. He enlisted, under this borrowed name, in 1693, on board the galley La Fidèle; he served in it three years, and was then discharged. Returned to Marseilles, he tried to maintain himself by selling a certain balm, which, he declared, his grandmother, the Dame de Caille, had taught him to make. As this speculation scarcely kept the pot boiling, there was no help for it but to enlist again, which he did, in 1697, at Toulon, still under the pseudonym of Pierre Mège, to which he added the soubriquet of Sans-Regret.

Such was his account of himself. On the other hand, out of twenty witnesses brought forward by the Sieur Rolland, several who had pursued their studies together with young De Caille declared that this person was not he; several others recognised in him Pierre Mège, who had been in the Marines ever since 1676. To all this the Marine, never losing his presence of mind, opposed the most peremptory denial; he even attacked his adversaries, whenever there was an opportunity. He demanded to be confronted with M. Rolland, in the presence of the judges. He then maintained, with unflinching eye and unwavering voice, that he had seen him at Geneva; that, since his own abjuration, he (Rolland), a magistrate and professed Catholic, had secretly partaken of the Lord's Supper in the grand "temple" there, as the French call Protestant places of worship. He minutely described M. Rolland's dress, the horse he rode, and the whole of his equipage. After this piece of barefaced impudence, intended to work on popular prejudices, he succeeded in obtaining an order to have further litigation transferred to Aix.

Meanwhile, M. de Caille, the father, on the 1st of January, 1700, sent his power of attorney to the Procureur of the Parlement of Provence, with full instructions to prosecute the impostor, who, if guilty, would be liable to capital punishment. To these he added a full judicial report, drawn up at Lausanne and Vevay, respecting the life, the illness, and the death, of his son.

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The certificate of death, legalised by the French ambassador in Switzerland, was not admitted as proof by the Toulon judge, the only proof received in France being an extract from the register of burials. Now, at that time, it was not usual to keep registers of burials in Switzerland. This absurd and pedantic refusal had afterwards its influence.

The Marine gained his point in being permitted to work upon popular passion and credulity. He was taken to Manosque, to Caille, and to Rougon; his journey was one long triumph. He made his entry into those places between ranks of enthusiastic gossips who had made up their minds to receive him as the young De Caille. He himself recognised several of the people present, addressing them by name, and recalling circumstances of their childhood. He gazed at the houses attentively, inquiring the reason of alterations that had been made during his absence. Evidently he had prepared his ground. His secret visit to Manosque should not be forgotten, nor his correct knowledge of the outside of buildings, together with his complete ignorance of their interior.

Throughout the long, long, legal controversy which followed, attempts were repeatedly made to gain over public opinion by exciting its fanaticism. For instance, in a circular letter sent to the clergy, we find: "You are entreated to have prayers in your church in behalf of M. de Caille, a gentleman of Provence, disavowed by his father for having embraced the Catholic religion. . . . This is an affair of religion, and the cause of God himself."

At last on the fourteenth of July, 1806, *six years* after its first hearing of the case, and after *fifty* audiences dispersed over those six years, the Court of Aix pronounced the following strange judgment:

It dismissed the demands of Le Gouche, Tardivi, and Consorts; it declared the said Entrevergues to be the veritable Isaac Le Brun de Castellane, the son of Scipion Le Brun de Castellane, Sieur de Caille and de Rougon, and of Judith Le Gouche, his father and mother. It adjudged him all their goods and heritages, with restitution of the fruits thereof from the 16th of December, 1702, with damages, to be assessed by experts. It allowed proceedings to be taken against the Sieur Rolland (Advocate General to the Parlement of Grenoble) and Consorts, for subornation of witnesses, calumny, and corruption of domestics; and it condemned the said Le Gouche, Tardivi, and Consorts to all the costs.

The motives which led the Judges of Aix to this decision seemed to be; first, that it was useless to waste their time over the proofs of the death of a man whom they had alive and well before their eyes; secondly, that they ought to give the benefit of any doubt to the defendant, who was already in possession of the disputed individuality; thirdly, that two witnesses in the affirmative ought to be preferred to a thousand witnesses in the negative. What a specimen of sophism and of begging the question to exhibit at the close of the vaunted age of Louis the Fourteenth!

The Aix judgment had not yet gone forth to the world, and M. de Boyer d'Aguille, who was charged with its execution, had not yet received his formal instructions, when the coarse impostor for whom the Parlement of Provence had just compromised its honour, hastened to put his judges to shame by multiplied proofs both of his folly and his infamy. At the very beginning of August, Aix was surprised with the news that the new Isaac de Caille was to marry Mademoiselle Serry, of Toulon. Now Madame Serry, the young lady's mother, was cousin german to M. de Villeneuve, one of the Aix judges, and nearly related to the above-named M. de Boyer d'Aguille, the reporter of the case. This circumstance explained the whole proceeding. If the insolvent, Pierre Mège, had been able to meet the heavy expenses of the lawsuit for nearly seven years, it was because M. Serry had supplied the funds, and his relations in the Parlement of Provence had guaranteed the issue.

The marriage of the person whom we will still call the Marine was celebrated with suspicious haste, M. Serry having obtained a dispensation exempting them from the publication of banns. On the day when the marriage contract was signed, the Marine gave his father-in-law a claim on his property for the sum of eighteen thousand livres. Once in possession, the false De Caille pillaged, dissipated, sold, the property thus wrested from the Rollands and the Tardivis. He turned everything into money, even the contents of the bee-hives. Nor did he forget to pay the creditors of that poor fellow, Pierre Mège, to whom he was under such obligations.

The first effect of this unexpected marriage was to call forth the claims of the Marine's old accomplice, La Violette, the carpenter. At the outset of his career, when De Muges and La Violette were his only supporters, he had promised the carpenter to marry his sister-in-law, a Toulon shoemaker's daughter, and to provide for his family. The banns had even been published; but the Marine, while under a cloud, had been obliged to defer the project, and the favoured of the Parlement of Provence remembered to forget it. A still graver fault was his conduct at Manosque. In spite of his fine promises, he lost no time in expelling from the mansion there, the poor inmates and the Sisters of La Charité. He had also the upstart vanity—which must have greatly disgusted his partisans—to have his portrait engraved, with the legend in capitals, "Isaac Le Brun de Castellane, Seigneur De Caille et De Rougon, agé de 37 ans en 1707." To this were appended half a dozen lines of doggerel:

> Capricious Fortune will'd to try
> From early youth my constancy'
> Of birthright robb'd, I had to brave
> A false consignment to the grave.
> But Heav'n, the storm and tempest past,
> Has brought me into port at last.

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It was premature of the Marine to shout and swagger before he was fairly out of the wood. A storm was brewing which he little expected.

Honorade Venelle, his real wife, had prudently kept quiet during the lawsuit, having, doubtless, been led to expect that, when once it was gained, her silence would be handsomely recompensed. It is probable that the Marine, puffed up with a victory which he regarded as final, sent adrift the former companion of his joys. She, however, although she might have winked at his infidelity had it been softened by the promised salve, had no notion of losing at once her money-reward and her husband. Possibly the Rollands and the Tardivis got wind of her anger, and turned it to their own account; for at the very same time that they took the only step now open to them—an appeal to the Privy Council to reverse the sentence—Honorade accused the traitor of bigamy. That done, she disappeared—her wisest plan; for the Court of Aix, smitten on the cheek by her claim to be the new De Caille's wife, implying that he and Pierre Mège were one and the same, ordered her to be arrested and put in prison.

The king's Privy Council had not, like the present Court of Cassation in France, a definite power and jurisdiction. Favour availed more with it than justice. In this case it was considerably influenced by a diplomatic incident occasioned by the contemptuous disregard with which the Tribunal of Toulon and the Court of Aix had treated legal documents duly authenticated in Switzerland. The result arrived at, after long argumentation, on the 17th of March, 1712, was, summarily, that the soldier of marines was *not* Isaac le Brun de Castellane; that he was forbidden henceforth to assume that title and quality, or to trouble the said Le Gouches and Tardivis in the possession and enjoyment of the goods left by the said Scipion le Brun and Judith le Gouche, under pain of a fine of one thousand livres; that the said Pierre Mège, called in the suit the soldier of marines, be taken bodily and conducted to the prisons of the Conciergerie du Palais, to be heard and interrogated concerning the facts touching the crime of bigamy.

Poor Magdelaine Serry, the victim of her parent's greed, sent in a demurrer to this decree, supported by the arguments of able counsel; but it availed her nothing, except to delay Mège's trial for bigamy. He was greatly surprised at being caught in that way, for he fancied himself safe from all attacks, except those which concerned his imposture. And he cheated justice, after all, by dying in prison before sentence could be pronounced upon him.

Gayot de Pitaval, who followed and reported the long lawsuit, if not clearly and concisely, at least with good sense, had occasion to visit Mège in prison. He had with him there a long conversation, the details of which, unfortunately, he has not given, He contents himself with simply stating that he twisted himself into a hundred shapes, in order to get at the bottom of the rogue; but that the latter, more slippery than an eel, avoided every admission that could compromise himself. "All that I could discover," he adds, "was that he was gifted with extraordinary cunning, hiding itself under apparent stupidity."

A detailed description of Mège's person, drawn up by medical and surgical experts, to ascertain what resemblance he might have to any of the De Caille family, does not convey the impression that either Honorade or Mademoiselle Serry need have been inconsolable for his loss:

Puny frame, weakly constitution, lean and thin; shrill voice; effeminate expression of countenance; dull white, colourless, and pallid skin; Socratic nose; thin lips, the lower one protruding; pointed chin; very scanty beard; watery lacklustre eyes, approaching nearer to olive-green than to any other colour; besides sundry other corporeal peculiarities much too curious to mention.

What was most strange, and what must have been most displeasing to behold, was that one half of his face (and, indeed, of his person generally) was dissimilar to the other half; one nostril was larger than the other; one cheek-bone (both high) higher than the other; one eyebrow garnished with twice as many hairs as the other.

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END OF THE NINETEENTH VOLUME.

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NO THOROUGHFARE.

BY CHARLES DICKENS AND WILKIE COLLINS.

BEING THE EXTRA CHRISTMAS NUMBER OF **ALL THE YEAR ROUND.**

CONTAINING THE AMOUNT OF TWO ORDINARY NUMBERS.

CHRISTMAS, 1867. Price **4d.**

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THE OVERTURE.

Day of the month and year, November the thirtieth, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five. London Time by the great clock of Saint Paul's, ten at night. All the lesser London churches strain their metallic throats. Some, flippantly begin before the heavy bell of the great cathedral; some, tardily begin three, four, half a dozen, strokes behind it; all are in sufficiently near accord, to leave a resonance in the air, as if the winged father who devours his children, had made a sounding sweep with his gigantic scythe in flying over the city.

What is this clock lower than most of the rest, and nearer to the ear, that lags so far behind to-night as to strike into the vibration alone? This is the clock of the Hospital for Foundling Children. Time was, when the Foundlings were received without question in a cradle at the gate. Time is, when inquiries are made respecting them, and they are taken as by favour from the mothers who relinquish all natural knowledge of them and claim to them for evermore.

The moon is at the full, and the night is fair with light clouds. The day has been otherwise than fair, for slush and mud, thickened with the droppings of heavy fog, lie black in the streets. The veiled lady who flutters up and down near the postern-gate of the Hospital for Foundling Children has need to be well shod to-night.

She flutters to and fro, avoiding the stand of hackney-coaches, and often pausing in the shadow of the western end of the great quadrangle wall, with her face turned towards the gate. As above her there is the purity of the moonlit sky, and below her there are the defilements of the pavement, so may she, haply, be divided in her mind between two vistas of reflection or experience? As her footprints crossing and recrossing one another have made a labyrinth in the mire, so may her track in life have involved itself in an intricate and unravellable tangle?

The postern-gate of the Hospital for Foundling Children opens, and a young woman comes out. The lady stands aside, observes closely, sees that the gate is quietly closed again from within, and follows the young woman.

Two or three streets have been traversed in silence before she, following close behind the object of her attention, stretches out her hand and touches her. Then the young woman stops and looks round, startled.

"You touched me last night, and, when I turned my head, you would not speak. Why do you follow me like a silent ghost?"

"It was not," returned the lady, in a low voice, "that I would not speak, but that I could not when I tried."

"What do you want of me? I have never done you any harm?"

"Never."

"Do I know you?"

"No."

"Then what can you want of me?"

"Here are two guineas in this paper. Take my poor little present, and I will tell you."

Into the young woman's face, which is honest and comely, comes a flush as she replies: "There is neither grown person nor child in all the large establishment that I belong to, who hasn't a good word for Sally. I am Sally. Could I be so well thought of, if I was to be bought?"

"I do not mean to buy you; I mean only to reward you very slightly."

Sally firmly, but not ungently, closes and puts back the offering hand. "If there is anything I can do for you, ma'am, that I will not do for its own sake, you are much mistaken in me if you think that I will do it for money. What is it you want?"

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"You are one of the nurses or attendants at the Hospital, I saw you leave to-night and last night."

"Yes, I am. I am Sally."

"There is a pleasant patience in your face which makes me believe that very young children would take readily to you."

"God bless 'em! So they do."

The lady lifts her veil, and shows a face no older than the nurse's. A face far more refined and capable than hers, but wild and worn with sorrow.

"I am the miserable mother of a baby lately received under your care. I have a prayer to make to you."

Instinctively respecting the confidence which has drawn aside the veil, Sally—whose ways are all ways of simplicity and spontaneity—replaces it, and begins to cry.

"You will listen to my prayer?" the lady urges. "You will not be deaf to the agonised entreaty of such a broken suppliant as I am?"

"O dear, dear, dear!" cries Sally. "What shall I say, or can I say! Don't talk of prayers. Prayers are to be put up to the Good Father of All, and not to nurses and such. And there! I am only to hold my place for half a year longer, till another young woman can be trained up to it. I am going to be married. I shouldn't have been out last night, and I shouldn't have been out to-night, but that my Dick (he is the young man I am going to be married to) lies ill, and I help his mother and sister to watch him. Don't take on so, don't take on so!"

"O good Sally, dear Sally," moans the lady, catching at her dress entreatingly. "As you are hopeful and I am hopeless; as a fair way in life is before you, which can never, never, be before me; as you can aspire to become a respected wife, and as you can aspire to become a proud mother; as you are a living loving woman, and must die; for GOD's sake hear my distracted petition!"

"Deary, deary, deary ME!" cries Sally, her desperation culminating in the pronoun, "what am I ever to do? And there! See how you turn my own words back upon me. I tell you I am going to be married, on purpose to make it clearer to you that I am going to leave, and therefore couldn't help you if I would, Poor Thing, and you make it seem to my own self as if I was cruel in going to be married and *not* helping you. It ain't kind. Now, is it kind, Poor Thing?"

"Sally! Hear me, my dear. My entreaty is for no help in the future. It applies to what is past. It is only to be told in two words."

"There! This is worse and worse," cries Sally, "supposing that I understand what two words you mean."

"You do understand. What are the names they have given my poor baby? I ask no more than that. I have read of the customs of the place. He has been christened in the chapel, and registered by some surname in the book. He was received last Monday evening. What have they called him?"

Down upon her knees in the foul mud of the by-way into which they have strayed—an empty street without a thoroughfare, giving on the dark gardens of the Hospital—the lady would drop in her passionate entreaty, but that Sally prevents her.

"Don't! Don't! You make me feel as if I was setting myself up to be good. Let me look in your pretty face again. Put your two hands in mine. Now, promise. You will never ask me anything more than the two words?"

"Never! Never!"

"You will never put them to a bad use, if I say them?"

"Never! Never!"

"Walter Wilding."

The lady lays her face upon the nurse's breast, draws her close in her embrace with both arms, murmurs a blessing and the words, "Kiss him for me!" and is gone.

Day of the month and year, the first Sunday in October, one thousand eight hundred and forty-seven. London Time by the great clock of Saint Paul's, half-past one in the afternoon. The clock of the Hospital for Foundling Children is well up with the Cathedral to-day. Service in the chapel is over, and the Foundling children are at dinner.

There are numerous lookers-on at the dinner, as the custom is. There are two or three governors, whole families from the congregation, smaller groups of both sexes, individual stragglers of various degrees. The bright autumnal sun strikes freshly into the wards; and the heavy-framed windows through which it shines, and the panelled walls on which it strikes, are such windows and such walls as pervade Hogarth's pictures. The girls' refectory (including that of the younger children) is the principal attraction. Neat attendants silently glide about the orderly and silent tables; the lookers-on move or stop as the fancy takes them; comments in whispers on face such a number from such a window are not unfrequent; many of the faces are of a character to fix attention. Some of the visitors from the outside public are accustomed visitors. They have established a speaking acquaintance with the occupants of particular seats at the tables, and halt at those points to bend down and say a word or two. It is no disparagement to their kindness that those points are generally points where personal attractions are. The monotony of the long spacious rooms and the double lines of faces, is agreeably relieved by these incidents, although so slight.

A veiled lady, who has no companion, goes among the company. It would seem that curiosity and opportunity have never brought her there before. She has the air of being a little troubled by the sight, and, as she goes the length of the tables, it is with a hesitating step and an uneasy manner. At length she comes to the refectory of the boys. They are so much

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less popular than the girls that it is bare of visitors when she looks in at the doorway.

But just within the doorway, chances to stand, inspecting, an elderly female attendant: some order of matron or housekeeper. To whom the lady addresses natural questions: As, how many boys? At what age are they usually put out in life? Do they often take a fancy to the sea? So, lower and lower in tone until the lady puts the question: "Which is Walter Wilding?"

Attendant's head shaken. Against the rules.

"You know which is Walter Wilding?"

So keenly does the attendant feel the closeness with which the lady's eyes examine her face, that she keeps her own eyes fast upon the floor, lest by wandering in the right direction they should betray her.

"I know which is Walter Wilding, but it is not my place, ma'am, to tell names to visitors."

"But you can show me without telling me."

The lady's hand moves quietly to the attendant's hand. Pause and silence.

"I am going to pass round the tables," says the lady's interlocutor, without seeming to address her. "Follow me with your eyes. The boy that I stop at and speak to, will not matter to you. But the boy that I touch, will be Walter Wilding. Say nothing more to me, and move a little away."

Quickly acting on the hint, the lady passes on into the room, and looks about her. After a few moments, the attendant, in a staid official way, walks down outside the line of tables commencing on her left hand. She goes the whole length of the line, turns, and comes back on the inside. Very slightly glancing in the lady's direction, she stops, bends forward, and speaks. The boy whom she addresses, lifts his head and replies. Good humouredly and easily, as she listens to what he says, she lays her hand upon the shoulder of the next boy on his right. That the action may be well noted, she keeps her hand on the shoulder while speaking in return, and pats it twice or thrice before moving away. She completes her tour of the tables, touching no one else, and passes out by a door at the opposite end of the long room.

Dinner is done, and the lady, too, walks down outside the line of tables commencing on her left hand, goes the whole length of the line, turns, and comes back on the inside. Other people have strolled in, fortunately for her, and stand sprinkled about. She lifts her veil, and, stopping at the touched boy, asks how old he is?

"I am twelve, ma'am," he answers, with his bright eyes fixed on hers.

"Are you well and happy?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"May you take these sweetmeats from my hand?"

"If you please to give them to me."

In stooping low for the purpose, the lady touches the boy's face with her forehead and with her hair. Then, lowering her veil again, she passes on, and passes out without looking back.

Act I.

THE CURTAIN RISES.

In a court-yard in the City of London, which was No Thoroughfare either for vehicles or foot-passengers; a court-yard diverging from a steep, a slippery, and a winding street connecting Tower-street with the Middlesex shore of the Thames; stood the place of business of Wilding and Co. Wine Merchants. Probably, as a jocose acknowledgment of the obstructive character of this main approach, the point nearest to its base at which one could take the river (if so inodorously minded) bore the appellation Break-Neck-Stairs. The court-yard itself had likewise been descriptively entitled in old time, Cripple Corner.

Years before the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one, people had left off taking boat at Break-Neck-Stairs, and watermen had ceased to ply there. The slimy little causeway had dropped into the river by a slow process of suicide, and two or three stumps of piles and a rusty iron mooring-ring were all that remained of the departed Break-Neck glories. Sometimes, indeed, a laden coal barge would bump itself into the place, and certain laborious heavers, seemingly mud-engendered, would arise, deliver the cargo in the neighbourhood, shove off, and vanish; but at most times the only commerce of Break-Neck-Stairs arose out of the conveyance of casks and bottles, both full and empty, both to and from the cellars of Wilding and Co. Wine Merchants. Even that commerce was but occasional, and through three-fourths of its rising tides the dirty indecorous drab of a river would come solitarily oozing and lapping at the rusty ring, as if it had heard of the Doge and the Adriatic, and wanted to be married to the great conserver of its filthiness, the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor.

Some two hundred and fifty yards on the right, up the opposite hill (approaching it from the low ground of Break-Neck-Stairs) was Cripple Corner. There was a pump in Cripple Corner, there was a tree in Cripple Corner. All Cripple Corner belonged to Wilding and Co. Wine Merchants. Their cellars burrowed under it, their mansion towered over it. It really had been a mansion in the days when merchants inhabited the City, and had a ceremonious shelter to the doorway without visible support, like the sounding-board over an old pulpit. It had also a number of long narrow strips of window, so disposed in its grave brick front as to render it symmetrically ugly. It had also on its roof, a cupola with a bell in it.

"When a man at five-and-twenty can put his hat on, and can say 'this hat covers the owner of this property and of the business which is transacted *on* this property,' I consider, Mr. Bintrey, that, without being boastful, he may be allowed to be deeply thankful. I don't know how it may appear to you, but so it appears to me."

Thus Mr. Walter Wilding to his man of law, in his own counting-house; taking his hat down from its peg to suit the action to the word, and

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hanging it up again when he had done so, not to overstep the modesty of nature.

An innocent, open-speaking, unused-looking man, Mr. Walter Wilding, with a remarkably pink and white complexion, and a figure much too bulky for so young a man, though of a good stature. With crispy curling brown hair, and amiable bright blue eyes. An extremely communicative man: a man with whom loquacity was the irrestrainable outpouring of contentment and gratitude. Mr. Bintrey, on the other hand, a cautious man with twinkling beads of eyes in a large overhanging bald head, who inwardly but intensely enjoyed the comicality of openness of speech, or hand, or heart.

"Yes," said Mr. Bintrey. "Yes. Ha, ha!"

A decanter, two wine-glasses, and a plate of biscuits, stood on the desk.

"You like this forty-five year old port wine?" said Mr. Wilding.

"Like it?" repeated Mr. Bintrey. "Rather, sir!"

"It's from the best corner of our best forty-five year old bin," said Mr. Wilding.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Bintrey. "It's most excellent."

He laughed again, as he held up his glass and ogled it, at the highly ludicrous idea of giving away such wine.

"And now," said Wilding, with a childish enjoyment in the discussion of affairs, "I think we have got everything straight, Mr. Bintrey."

"Everything straight," said Bintrey.

"A partner secured——"

"Partner secured," said Bintrey.

"A housekeeper advertised for——"

"Housekeeper advertised for," said Bintrey, "'apply personally at Cripple Corner, Great Tower-street, from ten to twelve'—to-morrow, by-the-by."

"My late dear mother's affairs wound up——"

"Wound up," said Bintrey.

"And all charges paid."

"And all charges paid," said Bintrey, with a chuckle: probably occasioned by the droll circumstance that they had been paid without a haggle.

"The mention of my late dear mother," Mr. Wilding continued, his eyes filling with tears and his pocket-handkerchief drying them, "unmans me still, Mr. Bintrey. You know how I loved her; you (her lawyer) know how she loved me. The utmost love of mother and child was cherished between us, and we never experienced one moment's division or unhappiness from the time when she took me under her care. Thirteen years in all! Thirteen years under my late dear mother's care, Mr. Bintrey, and eight of them her confidentially acknowledged son! You know the story, Mr. Bintrey, who but you, sir!" Mr. Wilding sobbed and dried his eyes, without attempt at concealment, during these remarks.

Mr. Bintrey enjoyed his comical port, and said, after rolling it in his mouth: "I know the story."

"My late dear mother, Mr. Bintrey," pursued the wine-merchant, "had been deeply deceived, and had cruelly suffered. But on that subject my late dear mother's lips were for ever sealed. By whom deceived, or under what circumstances, Heaven only knows. My late dear mother never betrayed her betrayer."

"She had made up her mind," said Mr. Bintrey, again turning his wine on his palate, "and she could hold her peace." An amused twinkle in his eyes pretty plainly added—"A devilish deal better than *you* ever will!"

"'Honour,'" said Mr. Wilding, sobbing as he quoted from the Commandments, "'thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land.' When I was in the Foundling, Mr. Bintrey, I was at such a loss how to do it, that I apprehended my days would be short in the land. But I afterwards came to honour my mother deeply, profoundly. And I honour and revere her memory. For seven happy years, Mr. Bintrey," pursued Wilding, still with the same innocent catching in his breath, and the same unabashed tears, "did my excellent mother article me to my predecessors in this business, Pebbleson Nephew. Her affectionate forethought likewise apprenticed me to the Vintners' Company, and made me in time a Free Vintner, and—and—everything else that the best of mothers could desire. When I came of age, she bestowed her inherited share in this business upon me; it was her money that afterwards bought out Pebbleson Nephew, and painted in Wilding and Co.; it was she who left me everything she possessed, but the mourning ring you wear. And yet, Mr. Bintrey," with a fresh burst of honest affection, "she is no more. It is little over half a year since she came into the Corner to read on that door-post with her own eyes, WILDING AND CO. WINE MERCHANTS. And yet she is no more!"

"Sad. But the common lot, Mr. Wilding," observed Bintrey. "At some time or other we must all be no more." He placed the forty-five year old port wine in the universal condition, with a relishing sigh.

"So now, Mr. Bintrey," pursued Wilding, putting away his pocket-handkerchief, and smoothing his eyelids with his fingers, "now that I can no longer show my love and honour for the dear parent to whom my heart was mysteriously turned by Nature when she first spoke to me, a strange lady, I sitting at our Sunday dinner-table in the Foundling, I can at least show that I am not ashamed of having been a Foundling, and that I, who never knew a father of my own, wish to be a father to all in my employment. Therefore," continued Wilding, becoming enthusiastic in his loquacity, "therefore, I want a thoroughly good housekeeper to undertake this dwelling-house of Wilding and Co. Wine Merchants, Cripple Corner, so that I may restore in it some of the old relations betwixt employer and employed! So that I may live in it on the spot where my money is made! So that I may daily sit at the head of the table at which the people in my employment eat together, and may

eat of the same roast and boiled, and drink of the same beer! So that the people in my employment may lodge under the same roof with me! So that we may one and all——I beg your pardon, Mr. Bintrey, but that old singing in my head has suddenly come on, and I shall feel obliged if you will lead me to the pump."

Alarmed by the excessive pinkness of his client, Mr. Bintrey lost not a moment in leading him forth into the court-yard. It was easily done, for the counting-house in which they talked together opened on to it, at one side of the dwelling-house. There, the attorney pumped with a will, obedient to a sign from the client, and the client laved his head and face with both hands, and took a hearty drink. After these remedies, he declared himself much better.

"Don't let your good feelings excite you," said Bintrey, as they returned to the counting-house, and Mr. Wilding dried himself on a jack-towel behind an inner door.

"No, no. I won't," he returned, looking out of the towel. "I won't. I have not been confused, have I?"

"Not at all. Perfectly clear."

"Where did I leave off, Mr. Bintrey?"

"Well, you left off—but I wouldn't excite myself, if I was you, by taking it up again just yet."

"I'll take care. I'll take care. The singing in my head came on at where, Mr. Bintrey?"

"At roast, and boiled, and beer," answered the lawyer, prompting—"lodging under the same roof—and one and all——"

"Ah! And one and all singing in the head together——"

"Do you know I really *would not* let my good feelings excite me, if I was you," hinted the lawyer again, anxiously. "Try some more pump."

"No occasion, no occasion. All right, Mr. Bintrey. And one and all forming a kind of family! You see, Mr. Bintrey, I was not used in my childhood to that sort of individual existence which most individuals have led, more or less, in their childhood. After that time I became absorbed in my late dear mother. Having lost her, I find that I am more fit for being one of a body than one by myself one. To be that, and at the same time to do my duty to those dependent on me, and attach them to me, has a patriarchal and pleasant air about it. I don't know how it may appear to you, Mr. Bintrey, but so it appears to me."

"It is not I who am all-important in the case, but you," returned Bintrey. "Consequently, how it may appear to me, is of very small importance."

"It appears to *me*," said Mr. Wilding, in a glow, "hopeful, useful, de-lightful!"

"Do you know," hinted the lawyer again, "I really would not ex——"

"I am not going to. Then there's Handel."

"There's who?" asked Bintrey.

"Handel, Mozart, Haydn, Kent, Purcell, Doctor Arne, Greene, Mendelssohn. I know the choruses to those anthems by heart. Foundling Chapel Collection. Why shouldn't we learn them together!"

"Who learn them together?" asked the lawyer, rather shortly.

"Employer and employed."

"Aye, aye!" returned Bintrey, mollified; as if he had half expected the answer to be, Lawyer and client. "That's another thing."

"Not another thing, Mr. Bintrey! The same thing. A part of the bond among us. We will form a Choir in some quiet church near the Corner here, and, having sung together of a Sunday with a relish, we will come home and take an early dinner together with a relish. The object that I have at heart now, is to get this system well in action without delay, so that my new partner may find it founded when he enters on his partnership."

"All good be with it!" exclaimed Bintrey, rising. "May it prosper! Is Joey Ladle to take a share in Handel, Mozart, Haydn, Kent, Purcell, Doctor Arne, Greene, and Mendelssohn?"

"I hope so."

"I wish them all well out of it," returned Bintrey, with much heartiness. "Good-bye, sir."

They shook hands and parted. Then (first knocking with his knuckles for leave) entered to Mr. Wilding, from a door of communication between his private counting-house and that in which his clerks sat, the Head Cellarman of the cellars of Wilding and Co. Wine Merchants, and erst Head Cellarman of the cellars of Pebbleson Nephew. The Joey Ladle in question. A slow and ponderous man, of the drayman order of human architecture, dressed in a corrugated suit and bibbed apron, apparently a composite of door-mat and rhinoceros-hide.

"Respecting this same boarding and lodging, Young Master Wilding," said he.

"Yes, Joey?"

"Speaking for myself, Young Master Wilding—and I never did speak and I never do speak for no one else—*I* don't want no boarding nor yet no lodging. But if you wish to board me and to lodge me, take me. I can peck as well as most men. Where I peck, ain't so high a object with me as What I peck. Nor even so high a object with me as How Much I peck. Is all to live in the house, Young Master Wilding? The two other cellarmen, the three porters, the two 'prentices, and the odd men?"

"Yes. I hope we shall all be an united family, Joey."

"Ah!" said Joey. "I hope they may be."

"They? Rather say we, Joey."

Joey Ladle shook his head. "Don't look to me to make we on it, Young Master Wilding, not at my time of life and under the circumstarnces which has formed my disposition. I have said to Pebbleson Nephew many a time, when they have said to me, 'Put a livelier face upon it, Joey'—I have said to them, 'Gentlemen, it is all wery well for you that has been accustomed to take your wine into your systems

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by the conwivial channel of your throttles, to put a lively face upon it; but,' I says, 'I have been accustomed to take *my* wine in at the pores of the skin, and, took that way, it acts different. It acts depressing. It's one thing, gentlemen,' I says to Pebbleson Nephew, 'to charge your glasses in a dining-room with a Hip Hurrah and a Jolly Companions Every One, and it's another thing to be charged yourself, through the pores, in a low dark cellar and a mouldy atmosphere. It makes all the difference betwixt bubbles and wapours,' I tells Pebbleson Nephew. And so it do. I've been a cellarman my life through, with my mind fully given to the business. What's the consequence? I'm as muddled a man as lives—you won't find a muddleder man than me—nor yet you won't find my equal in molloncolly. Sing of Filling the bumper fair, Every drop you sprinkle, O'er the brow of care, Smooths away a wrinkle? Yes. P'raps so. But try filling yourself through the pores, underground, when you don't want to it!"

"I am sorry to hear this, Joey. I had even thought that you might join a singing-class in the house."

"Me, sir? No, no, Young Master Wilding, you won't catch Joey Ladle muddling the Armony. A pecking-machine, sir, is all that I am capable of proving myself, out of my cellars; but that you're welcome to, if you think it's worth your while to keep such a thing on your premises."

"I do, Joey."

"Say no more, sir. The Business's word is my law. And you're a going to take Young Master George Vendale partner into the old Business?"

"I am, Joey."

"More changes, you see! But don't change the name of the Firm again. Don't do it, Young Master Wilding. It was bad luck enough to make it Yourself and Co. Better by far have left it Pebbleson Nephew that good luck always stuck to. You should never change luck when it's good, sir."

"At all events, I have no intention of changing the name of the House again, Joey."

"Glad to hear it, and wish you good day, Young Master Wilding. But you had better by half," muttered Joey Ladle, inaudibly, as he closed the door and shook his head, "have let the name alone from the first. You had better by half have followed the luck instead of crossing it."

ENTER THE HOUSEKEEPER.

The wine-merchant sat in his dining-room next morning, to receive the personal applicants for the vacant post in his establishment. It was an old-fashioned wainscoted room; the panels ornamented with festoons of flowers carved in wood; with an oaken floor, a well-worn Turkey carpet, and dark mahogany furniture, all of which had seen service and polish under Pebbleson Nephew. The great sideboard had assisted at many business-dinners given by Pebbleson Nephew to their connexion, on the principle of throwing sprats overboard to catch whales; and Pebbleson Nephew's comprehensive three-sided plate-warmer, made to fit the whole front of the large fireplace, kept watch beneath it over a sarcophagus-shaped cellaret that had in its time held many a dozen of Pebbleson Nephew's wine. But the little rubicund old bachelor with a pigtail, whose portrait was over the sideboard (and who could easily be identified as decidedly Pebbleson and decidedly not Nephew), had retired into another sarcophagus, and the plate-warmer had grown as cold as he. So, the golden and black griffins that supported the candelabra, with black balls in their mouths at the end of gilded chains, looked as if in their old age they had lost all heart for playing at ball, and were dolefully exhibiting their chains in the Missionary line of inquiry, whether they had not earned emancipation by this time, and were not griffins and brothers?

Such a Columbus of a morning was the summer morning, that it discovered Cripple Corner. The light and warmth pierced in at the open windows, and irradiated the picture of a lady hanging over the chimney-piece, the only other decoration of the walls.

"My mother at five-and-twenty," said Mr. Wilding to himself, as his eyes enthusiastically followed the light to the portrait's face, "I hang up here, in order that visitors may admire my mother in the bloom of her youth and beauty. My mother at fifty I hang in the seclusion of my own chamber, as a remembrance sacred to me. Oh! It's you, Jarvis!"

These latter words he addressed to a clerk who had tapped at the door, and now looked in.

"Yes, sir. I merely wished to mention that it's gone ten, sir, and that there are several females in the Counting-House."

"Dear me!" said the wine-merchant, deepening in the pink of his complexion and whitening in the white, "are there several? So many as several? I had better begin before there are more. I'll see them one by one, Jarvis, in the order of their arrival."

Hastily entrenching himself in his easy-chair at the table behind a great inkstand, having first placed a chair on the other side of the table opposite his own seat, Mr. Wilding entered on his task with considerable trepidation.

He ran the gauntlet that must be run on any such occasion. There were the usual species of profoundly unsympathetic women, and the usual species of much too sympathetic women. There were buccaneering widows who came to seize him, and who griped umbrellas under their arms, as if each umbrella were he, and each griper had got him. There were towering maiden ladies who had seen better days, and who came armed with clerical testimonials to their theology, as if he were Saint Peter with his keys. There were gentle maiden ladies who came to marry him. There were professional housekeepers, like non-commissioned officers, who put him through his domestic exercise, instead of submitting themselves to catechism. There were languid invalids to whom salary was

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not so much an object as the comforts of a private hospital. There were sensitive creatures who burst into tears on being addressed, and had to be restored with glasses of cold water. There were some respondents who came two together, a highly promising one and a wholly unpromising one: of whom the promising one answered all questions charmingly, until it would at last appear that she was not a candidate at all, but only the friend of the unpromising one, who had glowered in absolute silence and apparent injury.

At last, when the good wine-merchant's simple heart was failing him, there entered an applicant quite different from all the rest. A woman, perhaps fifty, but looking younger, with a face remarkable for placid cheerfulness, and a manner no less remarkable for its quiet expression of equability of temper. Nothing in her dress could have been changed to her advantage. Nothing in the noiseless self-possession of her manner could have been changed to her advantage. Nothing could have been in better unison with both, than her voice when she answered the question: "What name shall I have the pleasure of noting down?" with the words, "My name is Sarah Goldstraw. Mrs. Goldstraw. My husband has been dead many years, and we had no family."

Half a dozen questions had scarcely extracted as much to the purpose from any one else. The voice dwelt so agreeably on Mr. Wilding's ear as he made his note, that he was rather long about it. When he looked up again, Mrs. Goldstraw's glance had naturally gone round the room, and now returned to him from the chimney-piece. Its expression was one of frank readiness to be questioned, and to answer straight.

"You will excuse my asking you a few questions?" said the modest wine-merchant.

"Oh, surely, sir. Or I should have no business here."

"Have you filled the station of housekeeper before?"

"Only once. I have lived with the same widow lady for twelve years. Ever since I lost my husband. She was an invalid, and is lately dead: which is the occasion of my now wearing black."

"I do not doubt that she has left you the best credentials?" said Mr. Wilding.

"I hope I may say, the very best. I thought it would save trouble, sir, if I wrote down the name and address of her representatives, and brought it with me." Laying a card on the table.

"You singularly remind me, Mrs. Goldstraw," said Wilding, taking the card beside him, "of a manner and tone of voice that I was once acquainted with. Not of an individual—I feel sure of that, though I cannot recal what it is I have in my mind—but of a general bearing. I ought to add, it was a kind and pleasant one."

She smiled, as she rejoined: "At least, I am very glad of that, sir."

"Yes," said the wine-merchant, thoughtfully repeating his last phrase, with a momentary glance at his future housekeeper, "it was a kind and pleasant one. But that is the most I can make of it. Memory is sometimes like a half-forgotten dream. I don't know how it may appear to you, Mrs. Goldstraw, but so it appears to me."

Probably it appeared to Mrs. Goldstraw in a similar light, for she quietly assented to the proposition. Mr. Wilding then offered to put himself at once in communication with the gentlemen named upon the card: a firm of proctors in Doctors' Commons. To this, Mrs. Goldstraw thankfully assented. Doctors' Commons not being far off, Mr. Wilding suggested the feasibility of Mrs. Goldstraw's looking in again, say in three hours' time. Mrs. Goldstraw readily undertook to do so. In fine, the result of Mr. Wilding's inquiries being eminently satisfactory, Mrs. Goldstraw was that afternoon engaged (on her own perfectly fair terms) to come to-morrow and set up her rest as housekeeper in Cripple Corner.

THE HOUSEKEEPER SPEAKS.

On the next day Mrs. Goldstraw arrived, to enter on her domestic duties.

Having settled herself in her own room, without troubling the servants, and without wasting time, the new housekeeper announced herself as waiting to be favoured with any instructions which her master might wish to give her. The wine-merchant received Mrs. Goldstraw in the dining-room, in which he had seen her on the previous day; and, the usual preliminary civilities having passed on either side, the two sat down to take counsel together on the affairs of the house.

"About the meals, sir?" said Mrs. Goldstraw. "Have I a large, or a small, number to provide for?"

"If I can carry out a certain old-fashioned plan of mine," replied Mr. Wilding, "you will have a large number to provide for. I am a lonely single man, Mrs. Goldstraw; and I hope to live with all the persons in my employment as if they were members of my family. Until that time comes, you will only have me, and the new partner whom I expect immediately, to provide for. What my partner's habits may be, I cannot yet say. But I may describe myself as a man of regular hours, with an invariable appetite that you may depend upon to an ounce."

"About breakfast, sir?" asked Mrs. Goldstraw. "Is there anything particular——?"

She hesitated, and left the sentence unfinished. Her eyes turned slowly away from her master, and looked towards the chimney-piece. If she had been a less excellent and experienced housekeeper, Mr. Wilding might have fancied that her attention was beginning to wander at the very outset of the interview.

"Eight o'clock is my breakfast-hour," he resumed. "It is one of my virtues to be never tired of broiled bacon, and it is one of my vices to be habitually suspicious of the freshness of eggs." Mrs. Goldstraw looked back at him,

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still a little divided between her master's chimney-piece and her master. "I take tea," Mr. Wilding went on; "and I am perhaps rather nervous and fidgety about drinking it, within a certain time after it is made. If my tea stands too long——"

He hesitated, on his side, and left the sentence unfinished. If he had not been engaged in discussing a subject of such paramount interest to himself as his breakfast, Mrs. Goldstraw might have fancied that *his* attention was beginning to wander at the very outset of the interview.

"If your tea stands too long, sir——?" said the housekeeper, politely taking up her master's lost thread.

"If my tea stands too long," repeated the wine-merchant, mechanically, his mind getting further and further away from his breakfast, and his eyes fixing themselves more and more inquiringly on his housekeeper's face. "If my tea—— Dear, dear me, Mrs. Goldstraw! what *is* the manner and tone of voice that you remind me of? It strikes me even more strongly to-day, than it did when I saw you yesterday. What can it be?"

"What can it be?" repeated Mrs. Goldstraw.

She said the words, evidently thinking while she spoke them of something else. The wine-merchant, still looking at her inquiringly, observed that her eyes wandered towards the chimney-piece once more. They fixed on the portrait of his mother, which hung there, and looked at it with that slight contraction of the brow which accompanies a scarcely conscious effort of memory. Mr. Wilding remarked:

"My late dear mother, when she was five-and-twenty."

Mrs. Goldstraw thanked him with a movement of the head for being at the pains to explain the picture, and said, with a cleared brow, that it was the portrait of a very beautiful lady.

Mr. Wilding, falling back into his former perplexity, tried once more to recover that lost recollection, associated so closely, and yet so undiscoverably, with his new housekeeper's voice and manner.

"Excuse my asking you a question which has nothing to do with me or my breakfast," he said. "May I inquire if you have ever occupied any other situation than the situation of housekeeper?"

"Oh yes, sir. I began life as one of the nurses at the Foundling."

"Why, that's it!" cried the wine-merchant, pushing back his chair. "By Heaven! Their manner is the manner you remind me of!"

In an astonished look at him, Mrs. Goldstraw changed colour, checked herself, turned her eyes upon the ground, and sat still and silent.

"What is the matter?" asked Mr. Wilding.

"Do I understand that you were in the Foundling, sir?"

"Certainly. I am not ashamed to own it."

"Under the name you now bear?"

"Under the name of Walter Wilding."

"And the lady——?" Mrs. Goldstraw stopped short, with a look at the portrait which was now unmistakably a look of alarm.

"You mean my mother," interrupted Mr. Wilding.

"Your—mother," repeated the housekeeper, a little constrainedly, "removed you from the Foundling? At what age, sir?"

"At between eleven and twelve years old. It's quite a romantic adventure, Mrs. Goldstraw."

He told the story of the lady having spoken to him, while he sat at dinner with the other boys in the Foundling, and of all that had followed, in his innocently communicative way. "My poor mother could never have discovered me," he added, "if she had not met with one of the matrons who pitied her. The matron consented to touch the boy whose name was 'Walter Wilding' as she went round the dinner-tables—and so my mother discovered me again, after having parted from me as an infant at the Foundling doors."

At those words Mrs. Goldstraw's hand, resting on the table, dropped helplessly into her lap. She sat, looking at her new master, with a face that had turned deadly pale, and with eyes that expressed an unutterable dismay.

"What does this mean?" asked the wine-merchant. "Stop!" he cried. "Is there something else in the past time which I ought to associate with you? I remember my mother telling me of another person at the Foundling, to whose kindness she owed a debt of gratitude. When she first parted with me, as an infant, one of the nurses informed her of the name that had been given to me in the institution. You were that nurse?"

"God forgive me, sir—I was that nurse!"

"God forgive you?"

"We had better get back, sir (if I may make so bold as to say so), to my duties in the house," said Mrs. Goldstraw. "Your breakfast-hour is eight. Do you lunch, or dine, in the middle of the day?"

The excessive pinkness which Mr. Bintrey had noticed in his client's face began to appear there once more. Mr. Wilding put his hand to his head, and mastered some momentary confusion in that quarter, before he spoke again.

"Mrs. Goldstraw," he said, "you are concealing something from me!"

The housekeeper obstinately repeated, "Please to favour me, sir, by saying whether you lunch, or dine, in the middle of the day?"

"I don't know what I do in the middle of the day. I can't enter into my household affairs, Mrs. Goldstraw, till I know why you regret an act of kindness to my mother, which she always spoke of gratefully to the end of her life. You are not doing me a service by your silence. You are agitating me, you are alarming me, you are bringing on the singing in my head."

His hand went up to his head again, and the pink in his face deepened by a shade or two.

"It's hard, sir, on just entering your service," said the housekeeper, "to say what may cost me the loss of your good will. Please to remember, end how it may, that I only speak

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because you have insisted on my speaking, and because I see that I am alarming you by my silence. When I told the poor lady, whose portrait you have got there, the name by which her infant was christened in the Foundling, I allowed myself to forget my duty, and dreadful consequences, I am afraid, have followed from it. I'll tell you the truth, as plainly as I can. A few months from the time when I had informed the lady of her baby's name, there came to our institution in the country another lady (a stranger), whose object was to adopt one of our children. She brought the needful permission with her, and after looking at a great many of the children, without being able to make up her mind, she took a sudden fancy to one of the babies—a boy—under my care. Try, pray try, to compose yourself, sir! It's no use disguising it any longer. The child the stranger took away was the child of that lady whose portrait hangs there!"

Mr. Wilding started to his feet. "Impossible!" he cried out, vehemently. "What are you talking about? What absurd story are you telling me now? There's her portrait! Haven't I told you so already? The portrait of my mother!"

"When that unhappy lady removed you from the Foundling, in after years," said Mrs. Goldstraw, gently, "she was the victim, and you were the victim, sir, of a dreadful mistake."

He dropped back into his chair. "The room goes round with me," he said. "My head! my head!" The housekeeper rose in alarm, and opened the windows. Before she could get to the door to call for help, a sudden burst of tears relieved the oppression which had at first almost appeared to threaten his life. He signed entreatingly to Mrs. Goldstraw not to leave him. She waited until the paroxysm of weeping had worn itself out. He raised his head as he recovered himself, and looked at her with the angry unreasoning suspicion of a weak man.

"Mistake?" he said, wildly repeating her last word. "How do I know you are not mistaken yourself?"

"There is no hope that I am mistaken, sir. I will tell you why, when you are better fit to hear it."

"Now! now!"

The tone in which he spoke warned Mrs. Goldstraw that it would be cruel kindness to let him comfort himself a moment longer with the vain hope that she might be wrong. A few words more would end it—and those few words she determined to speak.

"I have told you," she said, "that the child of the lady whose portrait hangs there, was adopted in its infancy, and taken away by a stranger. I am as certain of what I say as that I am now sitting here, obliged to distress you, sir, sorely against my will. Please to carry your mind on, now, to about three months after that time. I was then at the Foundling, in London, waiting to take some children to our institution in the country. There was a question that day about naming an infant—a boy—who had just been received. We generally named them out of the Directory. On this occasion, one of the gentlemen who managed the Hospital happened to be looking over the Register. He noticed that the name of the baby who had been adopted ('Walter Wilding') was scratched out—for the reason, of course, that the child had been removed for good from our care. 'Here's a name to let,' he said. 'Give it to the new foundling who has been received to-day.' The name was given, and the child was christened. You, sir, were that child."

The wine-merchant's head dropped on his breast. "I was that child!" he said to himself, trying helplessly to fix the idea in his mind. "I was that child!"

"Not very long after you had been received into the Institution, sir," pursued Mrs. Goldstraw, "I left my situation there, to be married. If you will remember that, and if you can give your mind to it, you will see for yourself how the mistake happened. Between eleven and twelve years passed before the lady, whom you have believed to be your mother, returned to the Foundling, to find her son, and to remove him to her own home. The lady only knew that her infant had been called 'Walter Wilding.' The matron who took pity on her, could but point out the only 'Walter Wilding' known in the Institution. I, who might have set the matter right, was far away from the Foundling and all that belonged to it. There was nothing—there was really nothing that could prevent this terrible mistake from taking place. I feel for you—I do indeed, sir! You must think—and with reason—that it was in an evil hour that I came here (innocently enough, I'm sure), to apply for your housekeeper's place. I feel as if I was to blame—I feel as if I ought to have had more self-command. If I had only been able to keep my face from showing you, what that portrait and what your own words put into my mind—you need never, to your dying day, have known what you know now."

Mr. Wilding looked up suddenly. The inbred honesty of the man rose in protest against the housekeeper's last words. His mind seemed to steady itself, for the moment, under the shock that had fallen on it.

"Do you mean to say that you would have concealed this from me if you could?" he exclaimed.

"I hope I should always tell the truth, sir, if I was asked," said Mrs. Goldstraw. "And I know it is better for *me* that I should not have a secret of this sort weighing on my mind. But is it better for *you?* What use can it serve now—— ?"

"What use? Why, good Lord! if your story is true——"

"Should I have told it, sir, as I am now situated, if it had not been true?"

"I beg your pardon," said the wine-merchant. "You must make allowance for me. This dreadful discovery is something I can't realise even yet. We loved each other so dearly—I felt so fondly that I was her son. She died, Mrs. Goldstraw, in my arms—she died blessing me as only a mother *could* have

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blessed me. And now, after all these years, to be told she was *not* my mother! O me, O me! I don't know what I am saying!" he cried, as the impulse of self-control under which he had spoken a moment since, flickered, and died out. "It was not this dreadful grief—it was something else that I had it in my mind to speak of. Yes, yes. You surprised me—you wounded me just now. You talked as if you would have hidden this from me, if you could. Don't talk in that way again. It would have been a crime to have hidden it. You mean well, I know. I don't want to distress you—you are a kind-hearted woman. But you don't remember what my position is. She left me all that I possess, in the firm persuasion that I was her son. I am not her son. I have taken the place, I have innocently got the inheritance of another man. He must be found! How do I know he is not at this moment in misery, without bread to eat? He must be found! My only hope of bearing up against the shock that has fallen on me, is the hope of doing something which *she* would have approved. You must know more, Mrs. Goldstraw, than you have told me yet. Who was the stranger who adopted the child? You must have heard the lady's name?"

"I never heard it, sir. I have never seen her, or heard of her, since."

"Did she say nothing when she took the child away? Search your memory. She must have said something."

"Only one thing, sir, that I can remember. It was a miserably bad season, that year; and many of the children were suffering from it. When she took the baby away, the lady said to me, laughing, 'Don't be alarmed about his health. He will be brought up in a better climate than this—I am going to take him to Switzerland.'"

"To Switzerland? What part of Switzerland?"

"She didn't say, sir."

"Only that faint clue!" said Mr. Wilding. "And a quarter of a century has passed since the child was taken away! What am I to do?"

"I hope you won't take offence at my freedom, sir," said Mrs. Goldstraw; "but why should you distress yourself about what is to be done? He may not be alive now, for anything you know. And, if he is alive, it's not likely he can be in any distress. The lady who adopted him was a bred and born lady—it was easy to see that. And she must have satisfied them at the Foundling that she could provide for the child, or they would never have let her take him away. If I was in your place, sir—please to excuse my saying so—I should comfort myself with remembering that I had loved that poor lady whose portrait you have got there—truly loved her as my mother, and that she had truly loved me as her son. All she gave to you, she gave for the sake of that love. It never altered while she lived; and it won't alter, I'm sure, as long as *you* live. How can you have a better right, sir, to keep what you have got than that?"

Mr. Wilding's immovable honesty saw the fallacy in his housekeeper's point of view at a glance.

"You don't understand me," he said. "It's *because* I loved her that I feel it a duty—a sacred duty—to do justice to her son. If he is a living man, I must find him: for my own sake, as well as for his. I shall break down under this dreadful trial, unless I employ myself—actively, instantly employ myself—in doing what my conscience tells me ought to be done. I must speak to my lawyer; I must set my lawyer at work before I sleep to-night." He approached a tube in the wall of the room, and called down through it to the office below. "Leave me for a little, Mrs. Goldstraw," he resumed; "I shall be more composed, I shall be better able to speak to you later in the day. We shall get on well—I hope we shall get on well together—in spite of what has happened. It isn't your fault; I know it isn't your fault. There! there! shake hands; and—and do the best you can in the house—I can't talk about it now."

The door opened as Mrs. Goldstraw advanced towards it; and Mr. Jarvis appeared.

"Send for Mr. Bintrey," said the wine-merchant. "Say I want to see him directly."

The clerk unconsciously suspended the execution of the order, by announcing "Mr. Vendale," and showing in the new partner in the firm of Wilding and Co.

"Pray excuse me for one moment, George Vendale," said Wilding. "I have a word to say to Jarvis. Send for Mr. Bintrey," he repeated—"send at once."

Mr. Jarvis laid a letter on the table before he left the room.

"From our correspondents at Neuchâtel, I think, sir. The letter has got the Swiss postmark."

NEW CHARACTERS ON THE SCENE.

The words, "The Swiss Postmark," following so soon upon the housekeeper's reference to Switzerland, wrought Mr. Wilding's agitation to such a remarkable height, that his new partner could not decently make a pretence of letting it pass unnoticed.

"Wilding," he asked hurriedly, and yet stopping short and glancing around as if for some visible cause of his state of mind: "what is the matter?"

"My good George Vendale," returned the wine-merchant, giving his hand with an appealing look, rather as if he wanted help to get over some obstacle, than as if he gave it in welcome or salutation: "my good George Vendale, so much is the matter, that I shall never be myself again. It is impossible that I can ever be myself again. For, in fact, I am not myself."

The new partner, a brown-cheeked handsome fellow, of about his own age, with a quick determined eye and an impulsive manner, retorted with natural astonishment: "Not yourself?"

"Not what I supposed myself to be," said Wilding.

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"What, in the name of wonder, *did* you suppose yourself to be that you are not?" was the rejoinder, delivered with a cheerful frankness, inviting confidence from a more reticent man. "I may ask without impertinence, now that we are partners."

"There again!" cried Wilding, leaning back in his chair, with a lost look at the other. "Partners! I had no right to come into this business. It was never meant for me. My mother never meant it should be mine. I mean, his mother meant it should be his—if I mean anything—or if I am anybody."

"Come, come," urged his partner, after a moment's pause, and taking possession of him with that calm confidence which inspires a strong nature when it honestly desires to aid a weak one. "Whatever has gone wrong, has gone wrong through no fault of yours, I am very sure. I was not in this counting-house with you under the old *régime*, for three years, to doubt you, Wilding. We were not younger men than we are, together, for that. Let me begin our partnership by being a serviceable partner, and setting right whatever is wrong. Has that letter anything to do with it?"

"Hah!" said Wilding, with his hand to his temple. "There again! My head! I was forgetting the coincidence. The Swiss postmark."

"At a second glance I see that the letter is unopened, so it is not very likely to have much to do with the matter," said Vendale, with comforting composure. "Is it for you, or for us?"

"For us," said Wilding.

"Suppose I open it and read it aloud, to get it out of our way?"

"Thank you, thank you."

"The letter is only from our champagne-making friends, the House at Neuchâtel. 'Dear Sir. We are in receipt of yours of the 28th ult., informing us that you have taken your Mr. Vendale into partnership, whereon we beg you to receive the assurance of our felicitations. Permit us to embrace the occasion of specially commending to you, M. Jules Obenreizer.' Impossible!"

Wilding looked up in quick apprehension, and cried, "Eh?"

"Impossible sort of name," returned his partner, slightly—"Obenreizer. '—Of specially commending to you M. Jules Obenreizer, of Soho-square, London (north side), henceforth fully accredited as our agent, and who has already had the honour of making the acquaintance of your Mr. Vendale, in his (said M. Obenreizer's) native country, Switzerland.' To be sure: pooh pooh, what have I been thinking of! I remember now; 'when travelling with his niece.'

"With his ——?" Vendale had so slurred the last word, that Wilding had not heard it.

"When travelling with his Niece. Obenreizer's Niece," said Vendale, in a somewhat superfluously lucid manner. "Niece of Obenreizer. (I met them in my first Swiss tour, travelled a little with them, and lost them for two years; met them again, my Swiss tour before last, and have lost them ever since.) Obenreizer. Niece of Obenreizer. To be sure! Possible sort of name, after all! 'M. Obenreizer is in possession of our absolute confidence, and we do not doubt you will esteem his merits.' Duly signed by the House, 'Defresnier et Cie.' Very well. I undertake to see M. Obenreizer presently, and clear him out of the way. That clears the Swiss postmark out of the way. So now, my dear Wilding, tell me what I can clear out of *your* way, and I'll find a way to clear it."

More than ready and grateful to be thus taken charge of, the honest wine-merchant wrung his partner's hand, and, beginning his tale by pathetically declaring himself an Impostor, told it.

"It was on this matter, no doubt, that you were sending for Bintrey when I came in?" said his partner, after reflecting.

"It was."

"He has experience and a shrewd head; I shall be anxious to know his opinion. It is bold and hazardous in me to give you mine before I know his, but I am not good at holding back. Plainly, then, I do not see these circumstances as you see them. I do not see your position as you see it. As to your being an Impostor, my dear Wilding, that is simply absurd, because no man can be that without being a consenting party to an imposition. Clearly you never were so. As to your enrichment by the lady who believed you to be her son, and whom you were forced to believe, on her own showing, to be your mother, consider whether that did not arise out of the personal relations between you. You gradually became much attached to her; she gradually became much attached to you. It was on you, personally you, as I see the case, that she conferred these worldly advantages; it was from her, personally her, that you took them."

"She supposed me," objected Wilding, shaking his head, "to have a natural claim upon her, which I had not."

"I must admit that," replied his partner, "to be true. But if she had made the discovery that you have made, six months before she died, do you think it would have cancelled the years you were together, and the tenderness that each of you had conceived for the other, each on increasing knowledge of the other?"

"What I think," said Wilding, simply but stoutly holding to the bare fact, "can no more change the truth than it can bring down the sky. The truth is that I stand possessed of what was meant for another man."

"He may be dead," said Vendale.

"He may be alive," said Wilding. "And if he is alive, have I not—innocently, I grant you innocently—robbed him of enough? Have I not robbed him of all the happy time that I enjoyed in his stead? Have I not robbed him of the exquisite delight that filled my soul when that dear lady," stretching his hand towards the picture, "told me she was my mother? Have I not robbed him of all the care she lavished on me? Have I not even robbed him of all the devotion and duty that I so proudly gave to

her? Therefore it is that I ask myself, George Vendale, and I ask you, where is he? What has become of him?"

"Who can tell!"

"I must try to find out who can tell. I must institute inquiries. I must never desist from prosecuting inquiries. I will live upon the interest of my share—I ought to say his share—in this business, and will lay up the rest for him. When I find him, I may perhaps throw myself upon his generosity; but I will yield up all to him. I will, I swear. As I loved and honoured her," said Wilding, reverently kissing his hand towards the picture, and then covering his eyes with it. "As I loved and honoured her, and have a world of reasons to be grateful to her!" And so broke down again.

His partner rose from the chair he had occupied, and stood beside him with a hand softly laid upon his shoulder. "Walter, I knew you before to-day to be an upright man, with a pure conscience and a fine heart. It is very fortunate for me that I have the privilege to travel on in life so near to so trustworthy a man. I am thankful for it. Use me as your right hand, and rely upon me to the death. Don't think the worse of me if I protest to you that my uppermost feeling at present is a confused, you may call it an unreasonable, one. I feel far more pity for the lady and for you, because you did not stand in your supposed relations, than I can feel for the unknown man (if he ever became a man), because he was unconsciously displaced. You have done well in sending for Mr. Bintrey. What I think will be a part of his advice, I know is the whole of mine. Do not move a step in this serious matter precipitately. The secret must be kept among us with great strictness, for to part with it lightly would be to invite fraudulent claims, to encourage a host of knaves, to let loose a flood of perjury and plotting. I have no more to say now, Walter, than to remind you that you sold me a share in your business, expressly to save yourself from more work than your present health is fit for, and that I bought it expressly to do work, and mean to do it."

With these words, and a parting grip of his partner's shoulder that gave them the best emphasis they could have had, George Vendale betook himself presently to the counting-house, and presently afterwards to the address of M. Jules Obenreizer.

As he turned into Soho-square, and directed his steps towards its north side, a deepened colour shot across his sun-browned face, which Wilding, if he had been a better observer, or had been less occupied with his own trouble, might have noticed when his partner read aloud a certain passage in their Swiss correspondent's letter, which he had not read so distinctly as the rest.

A curious colony of mountaineers has long been enclosed within that small flat London district of Soho. Swiss watchmakers, Swiss silver-chasers, Swiss jewellers, Swiss importers of Swiss musical boxes and Swiss toys of various kinds, draw close together there. Swiss professors of music, painting, and languages; Swiss artificers in steady work; Swiss couriers, and other Swiss servants chronically out of place; industrious Swiss laundresses and clear-starchers; mysteriously existing Swiss of both sexes; Swiss, creditable and Swiss discreditable; Swiss to be trusted by all means, and Swiss to be trusted by no means; these diverse Swiss particles are attracted to a centre in the district of Soho. Shabby Swiss eating-houses, coffee-houses, and lodging-houses, Swiss drinks and dishes, Swiss service for Sundays, and Swiss schools for week-days, are all to be found there. Even the native-born English taverns drive a sort of broken-English trade; announcing in their windows Swiss whets and drams, and sheltering in their bars Swiss skirmishes of love and animosity on most nights in the year.

When the new partner in Wilding and Co. rang the bell of a door bearing the blunt inscription OBENREIZER on a brass plate—the inner door of a substantial house, whose ground story was devoted to the sale of Swiss clocks—he passed at once into domestic Switzerland. A white-tiled stove for winter-time filled the fireplace of the room into which he was shown, the room's bare floor was laid together in a neat pattern of several ordinary woods, the room had a prevalent air of surface bareness and much scrubbing; and the little square of flowery carpet by the sofa, and the velvet chimney-board with its capacious clock and vases of artificial flowers, contended with that tone, as if, in bringing out the whole effect, a Parisian had adapted a dairy to domestic purposes.

Mimic water was dropping off a mill-wheel under the clock. The visitor had not stood before it, following it with his eyes, a minute, when M. Obenreizer, at his elbow, startled him by saying, in very good English, very slightly clipped: "How do you do? So glad!"

"I beg your pardon. I didn't hear you come in."

"Not at all! Sit, please."

Releasing his visitor's two arms, which he had lightly pinioned at the elbows by way of embrace, M. Obenreizer also sat, remarking, with a smile: "You are well? So glad!" and touching his elbows again.

"I don't know," said Vendale, after exchange of salutations, "whether you may yet have heard of me from your House at Neuchâtel?"

"Ah, yes!"

"In connexion with Wilding and Co.?"

"Ah, surely!"

"Is it not odd that I should come to you, in London here, as one of the Firm of Wilding and Co., to pay the Firm's respects?"

"Not at all! What did I always observe when we were on the mountains? We call them vast; but the world is so little. So little is the world, that one cannot keep away from persons. There are so few persons in the world, that they continually cross and re-cross. So very little is the world, that one cannot get rid of a person. Not," touching his elbows again, with an ingratiatory smile, "that one would desire to get rid of you."

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"I hope not, M. Obenreizer."

"Please call me, in your country, Mr. I call myself so, for I love your country. If I *could* be English! But I am born. And you? Though descended from so fine a family, you have had the condescension to come into trade? Stop though. Wines? Is it trade in England or profession? Not fine art?"

"Mr. Obenreizer," returned Vendale, somewhat out of countenance, "I was but a silly young fellow, just of age, when I first had the pleasure of travelling with you, and when you and I and Mademoiselle your niece—who is well?"

"Thank you. Who is well."

"—Shared some slight glacier dangers together. If, with a boy's vanity, I rather vaunted my family, I hope I did so as a kind of introduction of myself. It was very weak, and in very bad taste; but perhaps you know our English proverb, 'Live and learn.'"

"You make too much of it," returned the Swiss. "And what the devil! After all, yours *was* a fine family."

George Vendale's laugh betrayed a little vexation as he rejoined: "Well! I was strongly attached to my parents, and when we first travelled together, Mr. Obenreizer, I was in the first flush of coming into what my father and mother left me. So I hope it may have been, after all, more youthful openness of speech and heart than boastfulness."

"All openness of speech and heart! No boastfulness!" cried Obenreizer. "You tax yourself too heavily. You tax yourself, my faith! as if you was your Government taxing you! Besides, it commenced with me. I remember, that evening in the boat upon the lake, floating among the reflections of the mountains and valleys, the crags and pine woods, which were my earliest remembrance, I drew a word-picture of my sordid childhood. Of our poor hut, by the waterfall which my mother showed to travellers; of the cow-shed where I slept with the cow; of my idiot half-brother always sitting at the door, or limping down the Pass to beg; of my half-sister always spinning, and resting her enormous goitre on a great stone; of my being a famished naked little wretch of two or three years, when they were men and women with hard hands to beat me, I, the only child of my father's second marriage—if it even was a marriage. What more natural than for you to compare notes with me, and say, 'We are as one by age; at that same time I sat upon my mother's lap in my father's carriage, rolling through the rich English streets, all luxury surrounding me, all squalid poverty kept far from me. Such is *my* earliest remembrance as opposed to yours!'"

Mr. Obenreizer was a black-haired young man of a dark complexion, through whose swarthy skin no red glow ever shone. When colour would have come into another cheek, a hardly discernible beat would come into his, as if the machinery for bringing up the ardent blood were there, but the machinery were dry. He was robustly made, well proportioned, and had handsome features. Many would have perceived that some surface change in him would have set them more at their ease with him, without being able to define what change. If his lips could have been made much thicker, and his neck much thinner, they would have found their want supplied.

But the great Obenreizer peculiarity was, that a certain nameless film would come over his eyes—apparently by the action of his own will—which would impenetrably veil, not only from those tellers of tales, but from his face at large, every expression save one of attention. It by no means followed that his attention should be wholly given to the person with whom he spoke, or even wholly bestowed on present sounds and objects. Rather, it was a comprehensive watchfulness of everything he had in his own mind, and everything that he knew to be, or suspected to be, in the minds of other men.

At this stage of the conversation, Mr. Obenreizer's film came over him.

"The object of my present visit," said Vendale, "is, I need hardly say, to assure you of the friendliness of Wilding and Co., and of the goodness of your credit with us, and of our desire to be of service to you. We hope shortly to offer you our hospitality. Things are not quite in train with us yet, for my partner, Mr. Wilding, is reorganising the domestic part of our establishment, and is interrupted by some private affairs. You don't know Mr. Wilding, I believe?"

Mr. Obenreizer did not.

"You must come together soon. He will be glad to have made your acquaintance, and I think I may predict that you will be glad to have made his. You have not been long established in London, I suppose, Mr. Obenreizer?"

"It is only now that I have undertaken this agency."

"Mademoiselle your niece—is—not married?"

"Not married."

George Vendale glanced about him, as if for any tokens of her.

"She has been in London?"

"She *is* in London."

"When, and where, might I have the honour of recalling myself to her remembrance?"

Mr. Obenreizer, discarding his film and touching his visitor's elbows as before, said lightly: "Come up-stairs."

Fluttered enough by the suddenness with which the interview he had sought was coming upon him after all, George Vendale followed up-stairs. In a room over the chamber he had just quitted—a room also Swiss-appointed—a young lady sat near one of three windows, working at an embroidery-frame; and an older lady sat with her face turned close to another white-tiled stove (though it was summer, and the stove was not lighted), cleaning gloves. The young lady wore an unusual quantity of fair bright hair, very prettily braided about a rather rounder white forehead than the average English type, and so her face might have been

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a shade — or say a light — rounder than the average English face, and her figure slightly rounder than the figure of the average English girl at nineteen. A remarkable indication of freedom and grace of limb, in her quiet attitude, and a wonderful purity and freshness of colour in her dimpled face and bright grey eyes, seemed fraught with mountain air. Switzerland too, though the general fashion of her dress was English, peeped out of the fanciful bodice she wore, and lurked in the curious clocked red stocking, and in its little silver-buckled shoe. As to the elder lady, sitting with her feet apart upon the lower brass ledge of the stove, supporting a lap-full of gloves while she cleaned one stretched on her left hand, she was a true Swiss impersonation of another kind; from the breadth of her cushion-like back, and the ponderosity of her respectable legs (if the word be admissible), to the black velvet band tied tightly round her throat for the repression of a rising tendency to *goitre;* or, higher still, to her great copper-coloured gold ear-rings; or, higher still, to her head-dress of black gauze stretched on wire.

"Miss Marguerite," said Obenreizer to the young lady, "do you recollect this gentleman?"

"I think," she answered, rising from her seat, surprised and a little confused: "it is Mr. Vendale?"

"I think it is," said Obenreizer, dryly. "Permit me, Mr. Vendale. Madame Dor."

The elder lady by the stove, with the glove stretched on her left hand, like a glover's sign, half got up, half looked over her broad shoulder, and wholly plumped down again and rubbed away.

"Madame Dor," said Obenreizer, smiling, "is so kind as to keep me free from stain or tear. Madame Dor humours my weakness for being always neat, and devotes her time to removing every one of my specks and spots."

Madame Dor, with the stretched glove in the air, and her eyes closely scrutinising its palm, discovered a tough spot in Mr. Obenreizer at that instant, and rubbed hard at him. George Vendale took his seat by the embroidery-frame (having first taken the fair right hand that his entrance had checked), and glanced at the gold cross that dipped into the bodice, with something of the devotion of a pilgrim who had reached his shrine at last. Obenreizer stood in the middle of the room with his thumbs in his waistcoat-pockets, and became filmy.

"He was saying down-stairs, Miss Obenreizer," observed Vendale, "that the world is so small a place, that people cannot escape one another. I have found it much too large for me since I saw you last."

"Have you travelled so far, then?" she inquired.

"Not so far, for I have only gone back to Switzerland each year; but I could have wished —and indeed I have wished very often—that the little world did not afford such opportunities for long escapes as it does. If it had been less, I might have found my fellow-travellers sooner, you know."

The pretty Marguerite coloured, and very slightly glanced in the direction of Madame Dor.

"You find us at length, Mr. Vendale. Perhaps you may lose us again."

"I trust not. The curious coincidence that has enabled me to find you, encourages me to hope not."

"What is that coincidence, sir, if you please?" A dainty little native touch in this turn of speech, and in its tone, made it perfectly captivating, thought George Vendale, when again he noticed an instantaneous glance towards Madame Dor. A caution seemed to be conveyed in it, rapid flash though it was; so he quietly took heed of Madame Dor from that time forth.

"It is that I happen to have become a partner in a House of business in London, to which Mr. Obenreizer happens this very day to be expressly recommended: and that, too, by another house of business in Switzerland, in which (as it turns out) we both have a commercial interest. He has not told you?"

"Ah!" cried Obenreizer, striking in, filmless. "No. I had not told Miss Marguerite. The world is so small and so monotonous that a surprise is worth having in such a little jog-trot place. It is as he tells you, Miss Marguerite. He, of so fine a family, and so proudly bred, has condescended to trade. To trade! Like us poor peasants who have risen from ditches!"

A cloud crept over the fair brow, and she cast down her eyes.

"Why, it is good for trade!" pursued Obenreizer, enthusiastically. "It ennobles trade! It is the misfortune of trade, it is its vulgarity, that any low people—for example, we poor peasants—may take to it and climb by it. See you, my dear Vendale!" He spoke with great energy. "The father of Miss Marguerite, my eldest half-brother, more than two times your age or mine, if living now, wandered without shoes, almost without rags, from that wretched Pass—wandered—wandered—got to be fed with the mules and dogs at an Inn in the main valley far away—got to be Boy there—got to be Ostler—got to be Waiter—got to be Cook—got to be Landlord. As Landlord, he took me (could he take the idiot beggar his brother, or the spinning monstrosity his sister?) to put as pupil to the famous watchmaker, his neighbour and friend. His wife dies when Miss Marguerite is born. What is his will, and what are his words, to me, when *he* dies, she being between girl and woman? 'All for Marguerite, except so much by the year for you. You are young, but I make her your ward, for you were of the obscurest and the poorest peasantry, and so was I, and so was her mother; we were abject peasants all, and you will remember it.' The thing is equally true of most of my countrymen, now in trade in this your London quarter of Soho. Peasants once; low-born drudging Swiss Peasants. Then how good and great for trade:" here, from having been warm, he became playfully jubilant, and touched the young wine-merchant's elbows again with his light embrace: "to be exalted by gentlemen!"

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"I do not think so," said Marguerite, with a flushed cheek, and a look away from the visitor, that was almost defiant. "I think it is as much exalted by us peasants."

"Fie, fie, Miss Marguerite," said Obenreizer. "You speak in proud England."

"I speak in proud earnest," she answered, quietly resuming her work, "and I am not English, but a Swiss peasant's daughter."

There was a dismissal of the subject in her words, which Vendale could not contend against. He only said in an earnest manner, "I most heartily agree with you, Miss Obenreizer, and I have already said so, as Mr. Obenreizer will bear witness," which he by no means did, "in this house."

Now, Vendale's eyes were quick eyes, and sharply watching Madame Dor by times, noted something in the broad back view of that lady. There was considerable pantomimic expression in her glove-cleaning. It had been very softly done when he spoke with Marguerite, or it had altogether stopped, like the action of a listener. When Obenreizer's peasant-speech came to an end, she rubbed most vigorously, as if applauding it. And once or twice, as the glove (which she always held before her, a little above her face) turned in the air, or as this finger went down, or that went up, he even fancied that it made some telegraphic communication to Obenreizer: whose back was certainly never turned upon it, though he did not seem at all to heed it.

Vendale observed, too, that in Marguerite's dismissal of the subject twice forced upon him to his misrepresentation, there was an indignant treatment of her guardian which she tried to check: as though she would have flamed out against him, but for the influence of fear. He also observed—though this was not much—that he never advanced within the distance of her at which he first placed himself: as though there were limits fixed between them. Neither had he ever spoken of her without the prefix "Miss," though whenever he uttered it, it was with the faintest trace of an air of mockery. And now it occurred to Vendale for the first time that something curious in the man which he had never before been able to define, was definable as a certain subtle essence of mockery that eluded touch or analysis. He felt convinced that Marguerite was in some sort a prisoner as to her free will—though she held her own against those two combined, by the force of her character, which was nevertheless inadequate to her release. To feel convinced of this, was not to feel less disposed to love her than he had always been. In a word, he was desperately in love with her, and thoroughly determined to pursue the opportunity which had opened at last.

For the present, he merely touched upon the pleasure that Wilding and Co. would soon have in entreating Miss Obenreizer to honour their establishment with her presence—a curious old place, though a bachelor house withal—and so did not protract his visit beyond such a visit's ordinary length. Going down stairs, conducted by his host, he found the Obenreizer counting-house at the back of the entrance-hall, and several shabby men in outlandish garments, hanging about, whom Obenreizer put aside that he might pass, with a few words in *patois*.

"Countrymen," he explained, as he attended Vendale to the door. "Poor compatriots. Grateful and attached, like dogs! Good-bye. To meet again. So glad!"

Two more light touches on his elbows dismissed him into the street.

Sweet Marguerite at her frame, and Madame Dor's broad back at her telegraph, floated before him to Cripple Corner. On his arrival there, Wilding was closeted with Bintrey. The cellar doors happening to be open, Vendale lighted a candle in a cleft stick, and went down for a cellarous stroll. Graceful Marguerite floated before him faithfully, but Madame Dor's broad back remained outside.

The vaults were very spacious, and very old. There had been a stone crypt down there, when bygones were not bygones; some said, part of a monkish refectory; some said, of a chapel; some said, of a Pagan temple. It was all one now. Let who would, make what he liked of a crumbled pillar and a broken arch or so. Old Time had made what *he* liked of it, and was quite indifferent to contradiction.

The close air, the musty smell, and the thunderous rumbling in the streets above, as being out of the routine of ordinary life, went well enough with the picture of pretty Marguerite holding her own against those two. So Vendale went on until, at a turning in the vaults, he saw a light like the light he carried.

"Oh! You are here, are you, Joey?"

"Oughtn't it rather to go, 'Oh! *You*'re here, are you, Master George?' For it's my business to be here. But it ain't yourn."

"Don't grumble, Joey."

"Oh! *I* don't grumble," returned the Cellarman. "If anything grumbles, it's what I've took in through the pores; it ain't me. Have a care as something in *you* don't begin a-grumbling, Master George. Stop here long enough for the wapours to work, and they'll be at it."

His present occupation consisted of poking his head into the bins, making measurements and mental calculations, and entering them in a rhinoceros-hide-looking note-book, like a piece of himself.

"They'll be at it," he resumed, laying the wooden rod that he measured with, across two casks, entering his last calculation, and straightening his back, "trust 'em! And so you've regularly come into the business, Master George?"

"Regularly. I hope you don't object, Joey?"

"*I* don't, bless you. But Wapours objects that you're too young. You're both on you too young."

"We shall get over that objection day by day, Joey."

"Aye, Master George; but I shall day by day get over the objection that I'm too old, and

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so I shan't be capable of seeing much improvement in you."

The retort so tickled Joey Ladle that he grunted forth a laugh and delivered it again, grunting forth another laugh after the second edition of "improvement in you."

"But what's no laughing matter, Master George," he resumed, straightening his back once more, "is, that Young Master Wilding has gone and changed the luck. Mark my words. He has changed the luck, and he'll find it out. *I* ain't been down here all my life for nothing! *I* know by what I notices down here, when it's a-going to rain, when it's a-going to hold up, when it's a-going to blow, when it's a-going to be calm. *I* know, by what I notices down here, when the luck's changed, quite as well."

"Has this growth on the roof anything to do with your divination?" asked Vendale, holding his light towards a gloomy ragged growth of dark fungus, pendent from the arches with a very disagreeable and repellent effect. "We are famous for this growth in this vault, aren't we?"

"We are, Master George," replied Joey Ladle, moving a step or two away, "and if you'll be advised by me, you'll let it alone."

Taking up the rod just now laid across the two casks, and faintly moving the languid fungus with it, Vendale asked, "Aye, indeed? Why so?"

"Why, not so much because it rises from the casks of wine, and may leave you to judge what sort of stuff a Cellarman takes into himself when he walks in the same all the days of his life, nor yet so much because at a stage of its growth it's maggots, and you'll fetch 'em down upon you," returned Joey Ladle, still keeping away, "as for another reason, Master George."

"What other reason?"

"(I wouldn't keep on touchin' it, if I was you, sir.) I'll tell you if you'll come out of the place. First, take a look at its colour, Master George."

"I am doing so."

"Done, sir. Now, come out of the place."

He moved away with his light, and Vendale followed with his. When Vendale came up with him, and they were going back together, Vendale, eyeing him as they walked through the arches, said: "Well, Joey? The colour."

"Is it like clotted blood, Master George?"

"Like enough, perhaps."

"More than enough, I think," muttered Joey Ladle, shaking his head solemnly.

"Well, say it is like; say it is exactly like. What then?"

"Master George, they do say——"

"Who?"

"How should I know who?" rejoined the Cellarman, apparently much exasperated by the unreasonable nature of the question. "Them! Them as says pretty well everything, you know. How should I know who They are, if you don't?"

"True. Go on."

"They do say that the man that gets by any accident a piece of that dark growth right upon his breast, will, for sure and certain, die by Murder."

As Vendale laughingly stopped to meet the Cellarman's eyes, which he had fastened on his light while dreamily saying those words, he suddenly became conscious of being struck upon his own breast by a heavy hand. Instantly following with his eyes the action of the hand that struck him—which was his companion's—he saw that it had beaten off his breast a web or clot of the fungus, even then floating to the ground.

For a moment he turned upon the cellarman almost as scared a look as the cellarman turned upon him. But in another moment they had reached the daylight at the foot of the cellar-steps, and before he cheerfully sprang up them, he blew out his candle and the superstition together.

EXIT WILDING.

On the morning of the next day, Wilding went out alone, after leaving a message with his clerk. "If Mr. Vendale should ask for me," he said, "or if Mr. Bintrey should call, tell them I am gone to the Foundling." All that his partner had said to him, all that his lawyer, following on the same side, could urge, had left him persisting unshaken in his own point of view. To find the lost man, whose place he had usurped, was now the paramount interest of his life, and to inquire at the Foundling was plainly to take the first step in the direction of discovery. To the Foundling, accordingly, the wine-merchant now went.

The once-familiar aspect of the building was altered to him, as the look of the portrait over the chimney-piece was altered to him. His one dearest association with the place which had sheltered his childhood had been broken away from it for ever. A strange reluctance possessed him, when he stated his business at the door. His heart ached as he sat alone in the waiting-room while the Treasurer of the institution was being sent for to see him. When the interview began, it was only by a painful effort that he could compose himself sufficiently to mention the nature of his errand.

The Treasurer listened with a face which promised all needful attention, and promised nothing more.

"We are obliged to be cautious," he said, when it came to his turn to speak, "about all inquiries which are made by strangers."

"You can hardly consider me a stranger," answered Wilding, simply. "I was one of your poor lost children here, in the bygone time."

The Treasurer politely rejoined that this circumstance inspired him with a special interest in his visitor. But he pressed, nevertheless, for that visitor's motive in making his inquiry. Without further preface, Wilding told him his motive, suppressing nothing.

The Treasurer rose, and led the way into the room in which the registers of the institution

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were kept. "All the information which our books can give is heartily at your service," he said. "After the time that has elapsed, I am afraid it is the only information we have to offer you."

The books were consulted, and the entry was found, expressed as follows:

"3rd March, 1836. Adopted, and removed from the Foundling Hospital, a male infant, named Walter Wilding. Name and condition of the person adopting the child—Mrs. Jane Ann Miller, widow. Address—Lime-Tree Lodge, Groombridge Wells. References—the Reverend John Harker, Groombridge Wells; and Messrs. Giles, Jeremie, and Giles, bankers, Lombard-street."

"Is that all?" asked the wine-merchant. "Had you no after-communication with Mrs. Miller?"

"None—or some reference to it must have appeared in this book."

"May I take a copy of the entry?"

"Certainly! You are a little agitated. Let me make the copy for you."

"My only chance, I suppose," said Wilding, looking sadly at the copy, "is to inquire at Mrs. Miller's residence, and to try if her references can help me?"

"That is the only chance I see at present," answered the Treasurer. "I heartily wish I could have been of some further assistance to you."

With those farewell words to comfort him, Wilding set forth on the journey of investigation which began from the Foundling doors. The first stage to make for, was plainly the house of business of the bankers in Lombard-street. Two of the partners in the firm were inaccessible to chance-visitors when he asked for them. The third, after raising certain inevitable difficulties, consented to let a clerk examine the Ledger marked with the initial letter "M." The account of Mrs. Miller, widow, of Groombridge Wells, was found. Two long lines, in faded ink, were drawn across it; and at the bottom of the page there appeared this note: "Account closed, September 30th, 1837."

So the first stage of the journey was reached—and so it ended in No Thoroughfare! After sending a note to Cripple Corner to inform his partner that his absence might be prolonged for some hours, Wilding took his place in the train, and started for the second stage on the journey—Mrs. Miller's residence at Groombridge Wells.

Mothers and children travelled with him; mothers and children met each other at the station; mothers and children were in the shops when he entered them to inquire for Lime-Tree Lodge. Everywhere, the nearest and dearest of human relations showed itself happily in the happy light of day. Everywhere, he was reminded of the treasured delusion from which he had been awakened so cruelly—of the lost memory which had passed from him like a reflection from a glass.

Inquiring here, inquiring there, he could hear of no such place as Lime-Tree Lodge. Passing a house-agent's office, he went in wearily, and put the question for the last time. The house-agent pointed across the street to a dreary mansion of many windows, which might have been a manufactory, but which was an hotel. "That's where Lime-Tree Lodge stood, sir," said the man, "ten years ago."

The second stage reached, and No Thoroughfare again!

But one chance was left. The clerical reference, Mr. Harker, still remained to be found. Customers coming in at the moment to occupy the house-agent's attention, Wilding went down the street, and, entering a bookseller's shop, asked if he could be informed of the Reverend John Harker's present address.

The bookseller looked unaffectedly shocked and astonished, and made no answer.

Wilding repeated his question.

The bookseller took up from his counter a prim little volume in a binding of sober grey. He handed it to his visitor, open at the title-page. Wilding read:

"The martyrdom of the Reverend John Harker in New Zealand. Related by a former member of his flock."

Wilding put the book down on the counter. "I beg your pardon," he said, thinking a little, perhaps, of his own present martyrdom while he spoke. The silent bookseller acknowledged the apology by a bow. Wilding went out.

Third and last stage, and No Thoroughfare for the third and last time.

There was nothing more to be done; there was absolutely no choice but to go back to London, defeated at all points. From time to time on the return journey, the wine-merchant looked at his copy of the entry in the Foundling Register. There is one among the many forms of despair—perhaps the most pitiable of all—which persists in disguising itself as Hope. Wilding checked himself in the act of throwing the useless morsel of paper out of the carriage window. "It may lead to something yet," he thought. "While I live, I won't part with it. When I die, my executors shall find it sealed up with my will."

Now, the mention of his will set the good wine-merchant on a new track of thought, without diverting his mind from its engrossing subject. He must make his will immediately.

The application of the phrase No Thoroughfare to the case had originated with Mr. Bintrey. In their first long conference following the discovery, that sagacious personage had a hundred times repeated, with an obstructive shake of the head, "No Thoroughfare, Sir, No Thoroughfare. My belief is that there is no way out of this at this time of day, and my advice is, make yourself comfortable where you are."

In the course of the protracted consultation, a magnum of the forty-five-year-old port wine had been produced for the wetting of Mr. Bintrey's legal whistle; but the more clearly he saw his way through the wine, the more emphatically

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he did not see his way through the case; repeating as often as he set his glass down empty, "Mr. Wilding, No Thoroughfare. Rest and be thankful."

It is certain that the honest wine-merchant's anxiety to make a will, originated in profound conscientiousness; though it is possible (and quite consistent with his rectitude) that he may unconsciously have derived some feeling of relief from the prospect of delegating his own difficulty to two other men who were to come after him. Be that as it may, he pursued his new track of thought with great ardour, and lost no time in begging George Vendale and Mr. Bintrey to meet him in Cripple Corner and share his confidence.

"Being all three assembled with closed doors," said Mr. Bintrey, addressing the new partner on the occasion, "I wish to observe, before our friend (and my client) entrusts us with his further views, that I have endorsed what I understand from him to have been your advice, Mr. Vendale, and what would be the advice of every sensible man. I have told him that he positively must keep his secret. I have spoken with Mrs. Goldstraw, both in his presence and in his absence; and if anybody is to be trusted (which is a very large IF), I think she is to be trusted to that extent. I have pointed out to our friend (and my client), that to set on foot random inquiries would not only be to raise the Devil, in the likeness of all the swindlers in the kingdom, but would also be to waste the estate. Now, you see, Mr. Vendale, our friend (and my client) does not desire to waste the estate, but, on the contrary, desires to husband it for what he considers—but I can't say I do—the rightful owner, if such rightful owner should ever be found. I am very much mistaken if he ever will be, but never mind that. Mr. Wilding and I are, at least, agreed that the estate is not to be wasted. Now, I have yielded to Mr. Wilding's desire to keep an advertisement at intervals flowing through the newspapers, cautiously inviting any person who may know anything about that adopted infant, taken from the Foundling Hospital, to come to my office; and I have pledged myself that such advertisement shall regularly appear. I have gathered from our friend (and my client) that I meet you here today to take his instructions, not to give him advice. I am prepared to receive his instructions, and to respect his wishes; but you will please observe that this does not imply my approval of either as a matter of professional opinion."

Thus Mr. Bintrey; talking quite as much *at* Wilding as *to* Vendale. And yet, in spite of his care for his client, he was so amused by his client's Quixotic conduct, as to eye him from time to time with twinkling eyes, in the light of a highly comical curiosity

"Nothing," observed Wilding, "can be clearer. I only wish my head were as clear as yours, Mr. Bintrey."

"If you feel that singing in it, coming on," hinted the lawyer, with an alarmed glance, "put it off.—I mean the interview."

"Not at all, I thank you," said Wilding. "What was I going to——"

"Don't excite yourself, Mr. Wilding," urged the lawyer.

"No; I *wasn't* going to," said the wine-merchant. "Mr. Bintrey and George Vendale, would you have any hesitation or objection to become my joint trustees and executors, or can you at once consent?"

"*I* consent," replied George Vendale, readily.

"*I* consent," said Bintrey, not so readily.

"Thank you both. Mr. Bintrey, my instructions for my last will and testament are short and plain. Perhaps you will now have the goodness to take them down. I leave the whole of my real and personal estate, without any exception or reservation whatsoever, to you two, my joint trustees and executors, in trust to pay over the whole to the true Walter Wilding, if he shall be found and identified within two years after the day of my death. Failing that, in trust to you two to pay over the whole as a benefaction and legacy to the Foundling Hospital."

"Those are all your instructions, are they, Mr. Wilding?" demanded Bintrey, after a blank silence, during which nobody had looked at anybody.

"The whole."

"And as to those instructions, you have absolutely made up your mind, Mr. Wilding?"

"Absolutely, decidedly, finally."

"It only remains," said the lawyer, with one shrug of his shoulders, "to get them into technical and binding form, and to execute and attest. Now, does that press? Is there any hurry about it? You are not going to die yet, sir."

"Mr. Bintrey," answered Wilding, gravely, "when I am going to die is within other knowledge than yours or mine. I shall be glad to have this matter off my mind, if you please."

"We are lawyer and client again," rejoined Bintrey, who, for the nonce, had become almost sympathetic. "If this day week—here, at the same hour—will suit Mr. Vendale and yourself, I will enter in my Diary that I attend you accordingly."

The appointment was made, and in due sequence kept. The will was formally signed, sealed, delivered, and witnessed, and was carried off by Mr. Bintrey for safe storage among the papers of his clients, ranged in their respective iron boxes, with their respective owners' names outside, on iron tiers in his consulting-room, as if that legal sanctuary were a condensed Family Vault of Clients.

With more heart than he had lately had for former subjects of interest, Wilding then set about completing his patriarchal establishment, being much assisted not only by Mrs. Goldstraw but by Vendale too: who, perhaps, had in his mind the giving of an Obenreizer dinner as soon as possible. Anyhow, the establishment being reported in sound working order, the Obenreizers, Guardian and Ward, were asked to

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dinner, and Madame Dor was included in the invitation. If Vendale had been over head and ears in love before—a phrase not to be taken as implying the faintest doubt about it—this dinner plunged him down in love ten thousand fathoms deep. Yet, for the life of him, he could not get one word alone with charming Marguerite. So surely as a blessed moment seemed to come, Obenreizer, in his filmy state, would stand at Vendale's elbow, or the broad back of Madame Dor would appear before his eyes. That speechless matron was never seen in a front view, from the moment of her arrival to that of her departure—except at dinner. And from the instant of her retirement to the drawing-room, after a hearty participation in that meal, she turned her face to the wall again.

Yet, through four or five delightful though distracting hours, Marguerite was to be seen, Marguerite was to be heard, Marguerite was to be occasionally touched. When they made the round of the old dark cellars, Vendale led her by the hand; when she sang to him in the lighted room at night, Vendale, standing by her, held her relinquished gloves, and would have bartered against them every drop of the forty-five year old, though it had been forty-five times forty-five years old, and its nett price forty-five times forty-five pounds per dozen. And still, when she was gone, and a great gap of an extinguisher was clapped on Cripple Corner, he tormented himself by wondering, Did she think that he admired her! Did she think that he adored her! Did she suspect that she had won him, heart and soul! Did she care to think at all about it! And so, Did she and Didn't she, up and down the gamut, and above the line and below the line, dear, dear! Poor restless heart of humanity! To think that the men who were mummies thousands of years ago, did the same, and ever found the secret how to be quiet after it!

"What do you think, George," Wilding asked him next day, "of Mr. Obenreizer? (I wont ask you what you think of Miss Obenreizer)."

"I don't know," said Vendale, "and I never did know, what to think of him."

"He is well informed and clever," said Wilding.

"Certainly clever."

"A good musician." (He had played very well, and sung very well, overnight.)

"Unquestionably a good musician."

"And talks well."

"Yes," said George Vendale, ruminating, "and talks well. Do you know, Wilding, it oddly occurs to me, as I think about him, that he doesn't keep silence well!"

"How do you mean? He is not obtrusively talkative."

"No, and I don't mean that. But when he is silent, you can hardly help vaguely, though perhaps most unjustly, mistrusting him. Take people whom you know and like. Take any one you know and like."

"Soon done, my good fellow," said Wilding. "I take you."

"I didn't bargain for that, or foresee it," returned Vendale, laughing. "However, take me. Reflect for a moment. Is your approving knowledge of my interesting face, mainly founded (however various the momentary expressions it may include) on my face when I am silent?"

"I think it is," said Wilding.

"I think so too. Now, you see, when Obenreizer speaks — in other words, when he is allowed to explain himself away—he comes out right enough; but when he has not the opportunity of explaining himself away, he comes out rather wrong. Therefore it is, that I say he does not keep silence well. And passing hastily in review such faces as I know, and don't trust, I am inclined to think, now I give my mind to it, that none of them keep silence well."

This proposition in Physiognomy being new to Wilding, he was at first slow to admit it, until asking himself the question whether Mrs. Goldstraw kept silence well, and remembering that her face in repose decidedly invited trustfulness, he was as glad as men usually are to believe what they desire to believe.

But, as he was very slow to regain his spirits or his health, his partner, as another means of setting him up—and perhaps also with contingent Obenreizer views—reminded him of those musical schemes of his in connexion with his family, and how a singing-class was to be formed in the house, and a Choir in a neighbouring church. The class was established speedily, and, two or three of the people having already some musical knowledge, and singing tolerably, the Choir soon followed. The latter was led and chiefly taught, by Wilding himself: who had hopes of converting his dependents into so many Foundlings, in respect of their capacity to sing sacred choruses.

Now, the Obenreizers being skilled musicians it was easily brought to pass that they should be asked to join these musical unions. Guardian and Ward consenting, or Guardian consenting for both, it was necessarily brought to pass that Vendale's life became a life of absolute thraldom and enchantment. For, in the mouldy Christopher-Wren church on Sundays, with its dearly beloved brethren assembled and met together, five-and-twenty strong, was not that Her voice that shot like light into the darkest places, thrilling the walls and pillars as though they were pieces of his heart! What time, too, Madame Dor in a corner of the high pew, turning her back upon everybody and everything, could not fail to be Ritualistically right at some moment of the service; like the man whom the doctors recommended to get drunk once a month, and who, that he might not overlook it, got drunk every day.

But, even those seraphic Sundays were surpassed by the Wednesday concerts established for the patriarchal family. At those concerts she would sit down to the piano and sing them, in her own tongue, songs of her own land, songs calling from the mountain-tops to Vendale, "Rise above the grovelling level country; come far away from the crowd; pursue me as I mount higher, higher, higher,

melting into the azure distance; rise to my supremest height of all, and love me here!" Then would the pretty bodice, the clocked stocking, and the silver-buckled shoe be, like the broad forehead and the bright eyes, fraught with the spring of a very chamois, until the strain was over.

Not even over Vendale himself did these songs of hers cast a more potent spell than over Joey Ladle in his different way. Steadily refusing to muddle the harmony by taking any share in it, and evincing the supremest contempt for scales and such like rudiments of music—which, indeed, seldom captivate mere listeners—Joey did at first give up the whole business for a bad job, and the whole of the performers for a set of howling Dervishes. But, descrying traces of unmuddled harmony in a part-song one day, he gave his two under-cellarmen faint hopes of getting on towards something in course of time. An anthem of Handel's led to further encouragement from him: though he objected that that great musician must have been down in some of them foreign cellars pretty much, for to go and say the same thing so many times over; which, took it in how you might, he considered a certain sign of your having took it in somehow. On a third occasion, the public appearance of Mr. Jarvis with a flute, and of an odd man with a violin, and the performance of a duet by the two, did so astonish him that, solely of his own impulse and motion, he became inspired with the words, "Ann Koar!" repeatedly pronouncing them as if calling in a familiar manner for some lady who had distinguished herself in the orchestra. But this was his final testimony to the merits of his mates, for, the instrumental duet being performed at the first Wednesday concert, and being presently followed by the voice of Marguerite Obenreizer, he sat with his mouth wide open, entranced, until she had finished; when, rising in his place with much solemnity, and prefacing what he was about to say with a bow that specially included Mr. Wilding in it, he delivered himself of the gratifying sentiment: "Arter that, ye may all on ye get to bed!" And ever afterwards declined to render homage in any other words to the musical powers of the family.

Thus began a separate personal acquaintance between Marguerite Obenreizer and Joey Ladle. She laughed so heartily at his compliment, and yet was so abashed by it, that Joey made bold to say to her, after the concert was over, he hoped he wasn't so muddled in his head as to have took a liberty? She made him a gracious reply, and Joey ducked in return.

"You'll change the luck time about, Miss," said Joey, ducking again. "It's such as you in the place that can bring round the luck of the place."

"Can I? Round the luck?" she answered, in her pretty English, and with a pretty wonder. "I fear I do not understand. I am so stupid."

"Young Master Wilding, Miss," Joey explained confidentially, though not much to her enlightenment, "changed the luck, afore he took in young Master George. So I say, and so they'll find. Lord! Only come into the place and sing over the luck a few times, Miss; and it won't be able to help itself!"

With this, and with a whole brood of ducks, Joey backed out of the presence. But Joey being a privileged person, and even an involuntary conquest being pleasant to youth and beauty, Marguerite merrily looked out for him next time.

"Where is my Mr. Joey, please?" she asked of Vendale.

So Joey was produced and shaken hands with, and that became an Institution.

Another Institution arose in this wise. Joey was a little hard of hearing. He himself said it was "Wapours," and perhaps it might have been; but whatever the cause of the effect, there the effect was, upon him. On this first occasion he had been seen to sidle along the wall, with his left hand to his left ear, until he had sidled himself into a seat pretty near the singer, in which place and position he had remained, until addressing to his friends the amateurs the compliment before mentioned. It was observed on the following Wednesday that Joey's action as a Pecking Machine was impaired at dinner, and it was rumoured about the table that this was explainable by his high-strung expectations of Miss Obenreizer's singing, and his fears of not getting a place where he could hear every note and syllable. The rumour reaching Wilding's ears, he in his good nature called Joey to the front at night before Marguerite began. Thus the Institution came into being that on succeeding nights, Marguerite, running her hands over the keys before singing, always said to Vendale, "Where is my Mr. Joey, please?" and that Vendale always brought him forth, and stationed him near by. That he should then, when all eyes were upon him, express in his face the utmost contempt for the exertions of his friends and confidence in Marguerite alone, whom he would stand contemplating, not unlike the rhinoceros out of the spelling-book, tamed and on his hind legs, was a part of the Institution. Also that when he remained after the singing in his most ecstatic state, some bold spirit from the back should say, "What do you think of it, Joey?" and he should be goaded to reply, as having that instant conceived the retort, "Arter that ye may all on ye get to bed!" These were other parts of the Institution.

But, the simple pleasures and small jests of Cripple Corner were not destined to have a long life. Underlying them from the first was a serious matter, which every member of the patriarchal family knew of, but which, by tacit agreement, all forbore to speak of. Mr. Wilding's health was in a bad way.

He might have overcome the shock he had sustained in the one great affection of his life, or he might have overcome his consciousness of being in the enjoyment of another man's pro-

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perty; but the two together were too much for him. A man haunted by twin ghosts, he became deeply depressed. The inseparable spectres sat at the board with him, ate from his platter, drank from his cup, and stood by his bedside at night. When he recalled his supposed mother's love, he felt as though he had stolen it. When he rallied a little under the respect and attachment of his dependents, he felt as though he were even fraudulent in making them happy, for that should have been the unknown man's duty and gratification.

Gradually, under the pressure of his brooding mind, his body stooped, his step lost its elasticity, his eyes were seldom lifted from the ground. He knew he could not help the deplorable mistake that had been made, but he knew he could not mend it; for the days and weeks went by, and no one claimed his name or his possessions. And now there began to creep over him, a cloudy consciousness of often-recurring confusion in his head. He would unaccountably lose, sometimes whole hours, sometimes a whole day and night. Once, his remembrance stopped as he sat at the head of the dinner-table, and was blank until daybreak. Another time, it stopped as he was beating time to their singing, and went on again when he and his partner were walking in the courtyard by the light of the moon, half the night later. He asked Vendale (always full of consideration, work, and help) how this was? Vendale only replied, "You have not been quite well; that's all." He looked for explanation into the faces of his people. But they would put it off with, "Glad to see you looking so much better, sir;" or "Hope you're doing nicely now, sir;" in which was no information at all.

At length, when the partnership was but five months old, Walter Wilding took to his bed, and his housekeeper became his nurse.

"Lying here, perhaps you will not mind my calling you Sally, Mrs. Goldstraw?" said the poor wine-merchant.

"It sounds more natural to me, sir, than any other name, and I like it better."

"Thank you, Sally. I think, Sally, I must of late have been subject to fits. Is that so, Sally? Don't mind telling me now."

"It has happened, sir."

"Ah! That is the explanation!" he quietly remarked. "Mr. Obenreizer, Sally, talks of the world being so small that it is not strange how often the same people come together, and come together, at various places, and in various stages of life. But it does seem strange, Sally, that I should, as I may say, come round to the Foundling to die."

He extended his hand to her, and she gently took it.

"You are not going to die, dear Mr. Wilding."

"So Mr. Bintrey said, but I think he was wrong. The old child-feeling is coming back upon me, Sally. The old hush and rest, as I used to fall asleep."

After an interval he said, in a placid voice, "Please kiss me, Nurse," and, it was evident, believed himself to be lying in the old Dormitory.

As she had been used to bend over the fatherless and motherless children, Sally bent over the fatherless and motherless man, and put her lips to his forehead, murmuring:

"God bless you!"

"God bless you!" he replied, in the same tone.

After another interval, he opened his eyes in his own character, and said: "Don't move me, Sally, because of what I am going to say; I lie quite easily. I think my time is come. I don't know how it may appear to you, Sally, but——"

Insensibility fell upon him for a few minutes; he emerged from it once more.

"—I don't know how it may appear to you, Sally, but so it appears to me."

When he had thus conscientiously finished his favourite sentence, his time came, and he died.

Act II.

VENDALE MAKES LOVE.

The summer and the autumn had passed. Christmas and the New Year were at hand.

As executors honestly bent on performing their duty towards the dead, Vendale and Bintrey had held more than one anxious consultation on the subject of Wilding's will. The lawyer had declared, from the first, that it was simply impossible to take any useful action in the matter at all. The only obvious inquiries to make, in relation to the lost man, had been made already by Wilding himself; with this result, that time and death together had not left a trace of him discoverable. To advertise for the claimant to the property, it would be necessary to mention particulars—a course of proceeding which would invite half the impostors in England to present themselves in the character of the true Walter Wilding. "If we find a chance of tracing the lost man, we will take it. If we don't, let us meet for another consultation on the first anniversary of Wilding's death." So Bintrey advised. And so, with the most earnest desire to fulfil his dead friend's wishes, Vendale was fain to let the matter rest for the present.

Turning from his interest in the past to his interest in the future, Vendale still found himself confronting a doubtful prospect. Months on months had passed since his first visit to Soho-square—and through all that time, the one language in which he had told Marguerite that he loved her was the language of the eyes, assisted, at convenient opportunities, by the language of the hand.

What was the obstacle in his way? The one immovable obstacle which had been in his way from the first. No matter how fairly the opportunities looked, Vendale's efforts to speak with Marguerite alone, ended invariably in one and the same result. Under the most accidental circumstances, in the most innocent manner possible, Obenreizer was always in the way.

With the last days of the old year came an unexpected chance of spending an evening with

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Marguerite, which Vendale resolved should be a chance of speaking privately to her as well. A cordial note from Obenreizer invited him, on New Year's Day, to a little family dinner in Soho-square. "We shall be only four," the note said. "We shall be only two," Vendale determined, "before the evening is out!"

New Year's Day, among the English, is associated with the giving and receiving of dinners, and with nothing more. New Year's Day, among the foreigners, is the grand opportunity of the year for the giving and receiving of presents. It is occasionally possible to acclimatise a foreign custom. In this instance Vendale felt no hesitation about making the attempt. His one difficulty was to decide what his New Year's gift to Marguerite should be. The defensive pride of the peasant's daughter—morbidly sensitive to the inequality between her social position and his—would be secretly roused against him if he ventured on a rich offering. A gift, which a poor man's purse might purchase, was the one gift that could be trusted to find its way to her heart, for the giver's sake. Stoutly resisting temptation, in the form of diamonds and rubies, Vendale bought a brooch of the filagree-work of Genoa—the simplest and most unpretending ornament that he could find in the jeweller's shop.

He slipped his gift into Marguerite's hand as she held it out to welcome him on the day of the dinner.

"This is your first New Year's Day in England," he said. "Will you let me help to make it like a New Year's Day at home?"

She thanked him, a little constrainedly, as she looked at the jeweller's box, uncertain what it might contain. Opening the box, and discovering the studiously simple form under which Vendale's little keepsake offered itself to her, she penetrated his motive on the spot. Her face turned on him brightly, with a look which said, "I own you have pleased and flattered me." Never had she been so charming, in Vendale's eyes, as she was at that moment. Her winter dress—a petticoat of dark silk, with a bodice of black velvet rising to her neck, and enclosing it softly in a little circle of swansdown—heightened, by all the force of contrast, the dazzling fairness of her hair and her complexion. It was only when she turned aside from him to the glass, and, taking out the brooch that she wore, put his New Year's gift in its place, that Vendale's attention wandered far enough away from her to discover the presence of other persons in the room. He now became conscious that the hands of Obenreizer were affectionately in possession of his elbows. He now heard the voice of Obenreizer thanking him for his attention to Marguerite, with the faintest possible ring of mockery in its tone. ("Such a simple present, dear sir! and showing such nice tact!") He now discovered, for the first time, that there was one other guest, and but one, besides himself, whom Obenreizer presented as a compatriot and friend. The friend's face was mouldy, and the friend's figure was fat. His age was suggestive of the autumnal period of human life. In the course of the evening he developed two extraordinary capacities. One was a capacity for silence; the other was a capacity for emptying bottles.

Madame Dor was not in the room. Neither was there any visible place reserved for her when they sat down to table. Obenreizer explained that it was "the good Dor's simple habit to dine always in the middle of the day. She would make her excuses later in the evening." Vendale wondered whether the good Dor had, on this occasion, varied her domestic employment from cleaning Obenreizer's gloves to cooking Obenreizer's dinner. This at least was certain—the dishes served were, one and all, as achievements in cookery, high above the reach of the rude elementary art of England. The dinner was unobtrusively perfect. As for the wine, the eyes of the speechless friend rolled over it, as in solemn ecstasy. Sometimes he said "Good!" when a bottle came in full; and sometimes he said "Ah!" when a bottle went out empty—and there his contributions to the gaiety of the evening ended.

Silence is occasionally infectious. Oppressed by private anxieties of their own, Marguerite and Vendale appeared to feel the influence of the speechless friend. The whole responsibility of keeping the talk going rested on Obenreizer's shoulders, and manfully did Obenreizer sustain it. He opened his heart in the character of an enlightened foreigner, and sang the praises of England. When other topics ran dry, he returned to this inexhaustible source, and always set the stream running again as copiously as ever. Obenreizer would have given an arm, an eye, or a leg to have been born an Englishman. Out of England there was no such institution as a home, no such thing as a fireside, no such object as a beautiful woman. His dear Miss Marguerite would excuse him, if he accounted for *her* attractions on the theory that English blood must have mixed at some former time with their obscure and unknown ancestry. Survey this English nation, and behold a tall, clean, plump, and solid people! Look at their cities! What magnificence in their public buildings! What admirable order and propriety in their streets! Admire their laws, combining the eternal principle of justice with the other eternal principle of pounds, shillings, and pence; and applying the product to all civil injuries, from an injury to a man's honour, to an injury to a man's nose! You have ruined my daughter—pounds, shillings, and pence! You have knocked me down with a blow in my face—pounds, shillings, and pence! Where was the material prosperity of such a country as *that* to stop? Obenreizer, projecting himself into the future, failed to see the end of it. Obenreizer's enthusiasm entreated permission to exhale itself, English fashion, in a toast. Here is our modest little dinner over, here is our frugal dessert on the table, and here is the admirer of England conforming to national customs, and making a speech! A toast to your white cliffs of Albion, Mr. Vendale! to your national virtues, your charming climate,

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and your fascinating women! to your Hearths, to your Homes, to your Habeas Corpus, and to all your other institutions! In one word—to England! Heep-heep-heep! hooray!

Obenreizer's voice had barely chanted the last note of the English cheer, the speechless friend had barely drained the last drop out of his glass, when the festive proceedings were interrupted by a modest tap at the door. A woman-servant came in, and approached her master with a little note in her hand. Obenreizer opened the note with a frown; and, after reading it with an expression of genuine annoyance, passed it on to his compatriot and friend. Vendale's spirits rose as he watched these proceedings. Had he found an ally in the annoying little note? Was the long-looked-for chance actually coming at last?

"I am afraid there is no help for it?" said Obenreizer, addressing his fellow-countryman. "I am afraid we must go."

The speechless friend handed back the letter, shrugged his heavy shoulders, and poured himself out a last glass of wine. His fat fingers lingered fondly round the neck of the bottle. They pressed it with a little amatory squeeze at parting. His globular eyes looked dimly, as through an intervening haze, at Vendale and Marguerite. His heavy articulation laboured, and brought forth a whole sentence at a birth. "I think," he said, "I should have liked a little more wine." His breath failed him after that effort; he gasped, and walked to the door.

Obenreizer addressed himself to Vendale with an appearance of the deepest distress.

"I am so shocked, so confused, so distressed," he began. "A misfortune has happened to one of my compatriots. He is alone, he is ignorant of your language—I and my good friend, here, have no choice but to go and help him. What can I say in my excuse? How can I describe my affliction at depriving myself in this way of the honour of your company?"

He paused, evidently expecting to see Vendale take up his hat and retire. Discerning his opportunity at last, Vendale determined to do nothing of the kind. He met Obenreizer dexterously, with Obenreizer's own weapons.

"Pray don't distress yourself," he said. "I'll wait here with the greatest pleasure till you come back."

Marguerite blushed deeply, and turned away to her embroidery-frame in a corner by the window. The film showed itself in Obenreizer's eyes, and the smile came something sourly to Obenreizer's lips. To have told Vendale that there was no reasonable prospect of his coming back in good time would have been to risk offending a man whose favourable opinion was of solid commercial importance to him. Accepting his defeat with the best possible grace, he declared himself to be equally honoured and delighted by Vendale's proposal. "So frank, so friendly, so English!" He bustled about, apparently looking for something he wanted, disappeared for a moment through the folding-doors communicating with the next room, came back with his hat and coat, and protesting that he would return at the earliest possible moment, embraced Vendale's elbows, and vanished from the scene in company with the speechless friend.

Vendale turned to the corner by the window, in which Marguerite had placed herself with her work. There, as if she had dropped from the ceiling, or come up through the floor—there, in the old attitude, with her face to the stove—sat an Obstacle that had not been foreseen, in the person of Madame Dor! She half got up, half looked over her broad shoulder at Vendale, and plumped down again. Was she at work? Yes. Cleaning Obenreizer's gloves, as before? No; darning Obenreizer's stockings.

The case was now desperate. Two serious considerations presented themselves to Vendale. Was it possible to put Madame Dor into the stove? The stove wouldn't hold her. Was it possible to treat Madame Dor, not as a living woman, but as an article of furniture? Could the mind be brought to contemplate this respectable matron purely in the light of a chest of drawers, with a black gauze head-dress accidently left on the top of it? Yes, the mind could be brought to do that. With a comparatively trifling effort, Vendale's mind did it. As he took his place on the old-fashioned window-seat, close by Marguerite and her embroidery, a slight movement appeared in the chest of drawers, but no remark issued from it. Let it be remembered that solid furniture is not easy to move, and that it has this advantage in consequence—there is no fear of upsetting it.

Unusually silent and unusually constrained—with the bright colour fast fading from her face, with a feverish energy possessing her fingers—the pretty Marguerite bent over her embroidery, and worked as if her life depended on it. Hardly less agitated himself, Vendale felt the importance of leading her very gently to the avowal which he was eager to make—to the other sweeter avowal still, which he was longing to hear. A woman's love is never to be taken by storm; it yields insensibly to a system of gradual approach. It ventures by the roundabout way, and listens to the low voice. Vendale led her memory back to their past meetings when they were travelling together in Switzerland. They revived the impressions, they recalled the events, of the happy bygone time. Little by little, Marguerite's constraint vanished. She smiled, she was interested, she looked at Vendale, she grew idle with her needle, she made false stitches in her work. Their voices sank lower and lower; their faces bent nearer and nearer to each other as they spoke. And Madame Dor? Madame Dor behaved like an angel. She never looked round; she never said a word; she went on with Obenreizer's stockings. Pulling each stocking up tight over her left arm, and holding that arm aloft from time to time, to catch the light on her work, there were moments, delicate and indescribable moments, when Madame Dor appeared to be sitting upside down, and contemplating one of her own respectable legs elevated in the air. As the minutes wore on, these

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elevations followed each other at longer and longer intervals. Now and again, the black gauze head-dress nodded, dropped forward, recovered itself. A little heap of stockings slid softly from Madame Dor's lap, and remained unnoticed on the floor. A prodigious ball of worsted followed the stockings, and rolled lazily under the table. The black gauze head-dress nodded, dropped forward, recovered itself, nodded again, dropped forward again, and recovered itself no more. A composite sound, partly as of the purring of an immense cat, partly as of the planing of a soft board, rose over the hushed voices of the lovers, and hummed at regular intervals through the room. Nature and Madame Dor had combined together in Vendale's interests. The best of women was asleep.

Marguerite rose to stop—not the snoring—let us say, the audible repose of Madame Dor. Vendale laid his hand on her arm, and pressed her back gently into her chair.

"Don't disturb her," he whispered. "I have been waiting to tell you a secret. Let me tell it now."

Marguerite resumed her seat. She tried to resume her needle. It was useless; her eyes failed her; her hand failed her; she could find nothing.

"We have been talking," said Vendale, "of the happy time when we first met, and first travelled together. I have a confession to make. I have been concealing something. When we spoke of my first visit to Switzerland, I told you of all the impressions I had brought back with me to England—except one. Can you guess what that one is?"

Her eyes looked steadfastly at the embroidery, and her face turned a little away from him. Signs of disturbance began to appear in her neat velvet bodice, round the region of the brooch. She made no reply. Vendale pressed the question without mercy.

"Can you guess what the one Swiss impression is, which I have not told you yet?"

Her face turned back towards him, and a faint smile trembled on her lips.

"An impression of the mountains, perhaps?" she said, slily.

"No; a much more precious impression than that."

"Of the lakes?"

"No. The lakes have not grown dearer and dearer in remembrance to me every day. The lakes are not associated with my happiness in the present, and my hopes in the future. Marguerite! all that makes life worth having hangs, for me, on a word from your lips. Marguerite! I love you!"

Her head drooped, as he took her hand. He drew her to him, and looked at her. The tears escaped from her downcast eyes, and fell slowly over her cheeks.

"Oh, Mr. Vendale," she said, sadly, "it would have been kinder to have kept your secret. Have you forgotten the distance between us? It can never, never, be!"

"There can be but one distance between us, Marguerite—a distance of your making. My love, my darling, there is no higher rank in goodness, there is no higher rank in beauty, than yours! Come! whisper the one little word which tells me you will be my wife!"

She sighed bitterly. "Think of your family," she murmured; "and think of mine!"

Vendale drew her a little nearer to him.

"If you dwell on such an obstacle as that," he said, "I shall think but one thought—I shall think I have offended you."

She started, and looked up. "Oh, no!" she exclaimed, innocently. The instant the words passed her lips, she saw the construction that might be placed on them. Her confession had escaped her in spite of herself. A lovely flush of colour overspread her face. She made a momentary effort to disengage herself from her lover's embrace. She looked up at him entreatingly. She tried to speak. The words died on her lips in the kiss that Vendale pressed on them. "Let me go, Mr. Vendale!" she said, faintly.

"Call me George."

She laid her head on his bosom. All her heart went out to him at last. "George!" she whispered.

"Say you love me!"

Her arms twined themselves gently round his neck. Her lips, timidly touching his cheek, murmured the delicious words—"I love you!"

In the moment of silence that followed, the sound of the opening and closing of the house-door came clear to them through the wintry stillness of the street.

Marguerite started to her feet.

"Let me go!" she said. "He has come back!"

She hurried from the room, and touched Madame Dor's shoulder in passing. Madame Dor woke up with a loud snort, looked first over one shoulder and then over the other, peered down into her lap, and discovered neither stockings, worsted, nor darning-needle in it. At the same moment, footsteps became audible ascending the stairs. "Mon Dieu!" said Madame Dor, addressing herself to the stove, and trembling violently. Vendale picked up the stockings and the ball, and huddled them all back in a heap over her shoulder. "Mon Dieu!" said Madame Dor, for the second time, as the avalanche of worsted poured into her capacious lap.

The door opened, and Obenreizer came in. His first glance round the room showed him that Marguerite was absent.

"What!" he exclaimed, "my niece is away? My niece is not here to entertain you in my absence? This is unpardonable. I shall bring her back instantly."

Vendale stopped him.

"I beg you will not disturb Miss Obenreizer," he said. "You have returned, I see, without your friend?"

"My friend remains, and consoles our afflicted compatriot. A heart-rending scene, Mr. Vendale! The household gods at the pawnbroker's—the family immersed in tears. We all em

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braced in silence. My admirable friend alone possessed his composure. He sent out, on the spot, for a bottle of wine."

"Can I say a word to you in private, Mr. Obenreizer?"

"Assuredly." He turned to Madame Dor. "My good creature, you are sinking for want of repose. Mr. Vendale will excuse you."

Madame Dor rose, and set forth sideways on her journey from the stove to bed. She dropped a stocking. Vendale picked it up for her, and opened one of the folding-doors. She advanced a step, and dropped three more stockings. Vendale, stooping to recover them as before, Obenreizer interfered with profuse apologies, and with a warning look at Madame Dor. Madame Dor acknowledged the look by dropping the whole of the stockings in a heap, and then shuffling away panic-stricken from the scene of disaster. Obenreizer swept up the complete collection fiercely in both hands. "Go!" he cried, giving his prodigious handful a preparatory swing in the air. Madame Dor said, "Mon Dieu," and vanished into the next room, pursued by a shower of stockings.

"What must you think, Mr. Vendale," said Obenreizer, closing the door, "of this deplorable intrusion of domestic details? For myself, I blush at it. We are beginning the New Year as badly as possible; everything has gone wrong to-night. Be seated, pray—and say, what may I offer you? Shall we pay our best respects to another of your noble English institutions? It is my study to be, what you call, jolly. I propose a grog."

Vendale declined the grog with all needful respect for that noble institution.

"I wish to speak to you on a subject in which I am deeply interested," he said. "You must have observed, Mr. Obenreizer, that I have, from the first, felt no ordinary admiration for your charming niece?"

"You are very good. In my niece's name, I thank you."

"Perhaps you may have noticed, latterly, that my admiration for Miss Obenreizer has grown into a tenderer and deeper feeling—— ?"

"Shall we say friendship, Mr. Vendale?"

"Say love—and we shall be nearer to the truth."

Obenreizer started out of his chair. The faintly discernible beat, which was his nearest approach to a change of colour, showed itself suddenly in his cheeks.

"You are Miss Obenreizer's guardian," pursued Vendale. "I ask you to confer upon me the greatest of all favours—I ask you to give me her hand in marriage."

Obenreizer dropped back into his chair. "Mr. Vendale," he said, "you petrify me."

"I will wait," rejoined Vendale, "until you have recovered yourself."

"One word before I recover myself. You have said nothing about this to my niece?"

"I have opened my whole heart to your niece. And I have reason to hope——"

"What!" interposed Obenreizer. "You have made a proposal to my niece, without first asking for my authority to pay your addresses to her?" He struck his hand on the table, and lost his hold over himself for the first time in Vendale's experience of him. "Sir!" he exclaimed, indignantly, "what sort of conduct is this? As a man of honour, speaking to a man of honour, how can you justify it?"

"I can only justify it as one of our English institutions," said Vendale, quietly. "You admire our English institutions. I can't honestly tell you, Mr. Obenreizer, that I regret what I have done. I can only assure you that I have not acted in the matter with any intentional disrespect towards yourself. This said, may I ask you to tell me plainly what objection you see to favouring my suit?"

"I see this immense objection," answered Obenreizer, "that my niece and you are not on a social equality together. My niece is the daughter of a poor peasant; and you are the son of a gentleman. You do us an honour," he added, lowering himself again gradually to his customary polite level, "which deserves, and has, our most grateful acknowledgments. But the inequality is too glaring; the sacrifice is too great. You English are a proud people, Mr. Vendale. I have observed enough of this country to see that such a marriage as you propose would be a scandal here. Not a hand would be held out to your peasant-wife; and all your best friends would desert you."

"One moment," said Vendale, interposing on his side. "I may claim, without any great arrogance, to know more of my country-people in general, and of my own friends in particular, than you do. In the estimation of everybody whose opinion is worth having, my wife herself would be the one sufficient justification of my marriage. If I did not feel certain—observe, I say certain—that I am offering her a position which she can accept without so much as the shadow of a humiliation—I would never (cost me what it might) have asked her to be my wife. Is there any other obstacle that you see? Have you any personal objection to me?"

Obenreizer spread out both his hands in courteous protest. "Personal objection!" he exclaimed. "Dear sir, the bare question is painful to me."

"We are both men of business," pursued Vendale, "and you naturally expect me to satisfy you that I have the means of supporting a wife. I can explain my pecuniary position in two words. I inherit from my parents a fortune of twenty thousand pounds. In half of that sum I have only a life-interest, to which, if I die, leaving a widow, my widow succeeds. If I die, leaving children, the money itself is divided among them, as they come of age. The other half of my fortune is at my own disposal, and is invested in the wine-business. I see my way to greatly improving that business. As it stands at present, I cannot state my return from my capital embarked at more than twelve hundred a year. Add the yearly value of my life-interest—and the total reaches a present annual income of fifteen hundred pounds. I have the fairest prospect of soon making it more. In the

mean time, do you object to me on pecuniary grounds?"

Driven back to his last entrenchment, Obenreizer rose, and took a turn backwards and forwards in the room. For the moment, he was plainly at a loss what to say or do next.

"Before I answer that last question," he said, after a little close consideration with himself, "I beg leave to revert for a moment to Miss Marguerite. You said something just now which seemed to imply that she returns the sentiment with which you are pleased to regard her?"

"I have the inestimable happiness," said Vendale, "of knowing that she loves me."

Obenreizer stood silent for a moment, with the film over his eyes, and the faintly perceptible beat becoming visible again in his cheeks.

"If you will excuse me for a few minutes," he said, with ceremonious politeness, "I should like to have the opportunity of speaking to my niece." With those words, he bowed, and quitted the room.

Left by himself, Vendale's thoughts (as a necessary result of the interview, thus far) turned instinctively to the consideration of Obenreizer's motives. He had put obstacles in the way of the courtship; he was now putting obstacles in the way of the marriage—a marriage offering advantages which even his ingenuity could not dispute. On the face of it, his conduct was incomprehensible. What did it mean?

Seeking, under the surface, for the answer to that question—and remembering that Obenreizer was a man of about his own age; also, that Marguerite was, strictly speaking, his half-niece only—Vendale asked himself, with a lover's ready jealousy, whether he had a rival to fear, as well as a guardian to conciliate. The thought just crossed his mind, and no more. The sense of Marguerite's kiss still lingering on his cheek reminded him gently that even the jealousy of a moment was now a treason to *her*.

On reflection, it seemed most likely that a personal motive of another kind might suggest the true explanation of Obenreizer's conduct. Marguerite's grace and beauty were precious ornaments in that little household. They gave it a special social attraction and a special social importance. They armed Obenreizer with a certain influence in reserve, which he could always depend upon to make his house attractive, and which he might always bring more or less to bear on the forwarding of his own private ends. Was he the sort of man to resign such advantages as were here implied, without obtaining the fullest possible compensation for the loss? A connexion by marriage with Vendale offered him solid advantages, beyond all doubt. But there were hundreds of men in London with far greater power and far wider influence than Vendale possessed. Was it possible that this man's ambition secretly looked higher than the highest prospects that could be offered to him by the alliance now proposed for his niece? As the question passed through Vendale's mind, the man himself reappeared—to answer it, or not to answer it, as the event might prove.

A marked change was visible in Obenreizer when he resumed his place. His manner was less assured, and there were plain traces about his mouth of recent agitation which had not been successfully composed. Had he said something, referring either to Vendale or to himself, which had roused Marguerite's spirit, and which had placed him, for the first time, face to face with a resolute assertion of his niece's will? It might or might not be. This only was certain—he looked like a man who had met with a repulse.

"I have spoken to my niece," he began. "I find, Mr. Vendale, that even your influence has not entirely blinded her to the social objections to your proposal."

"May I ask," returned Vendale, "if that is the only result of your interview with Miss Obenreizer?"

A momentary flash leapt out through the Obenreizer film.

"You are master of the situation," he answered, in a tone of sardonic submission. "If you insist on my admitting it, I do admit it in those words. My niece's will and mine used to be one, Mr. Vendale. You have come between us, and her will is now yours. In my country, we know when we are beaten, and we submit with our best grace. I submit, with my best grace, on certain conditions. Let us revert to the statement of your pecuniary position. I have an objection to you, my dear sir—a most amazing, a most audacious objection, from a man in my position to a man in yours."

"What is it?"

"You have honoured me by making a proposal for my niece's hand. For the present (with best thanks and respects), I beg to decline it."

"Why?"

"Because you are not rich enough."

The objection, as the speaker had foreseen, took Vendale completely by surprise. For the moment he was speechless.

"Your income is fifteen hundred a year," pursued Obenreizer. "In my miserable country I should fall on my knees before your income, and say, 'What a princely fortune!' In wealthy England, I sit as I am, and say, 'A modest independence, dear sir; nothing more. Enough, perhaps, for a wife in your own rank of life, who has no social prejudices to conquer. Not more than half enough for a wife who is a meanly born foreigner, and who has all your social prejudices against her.' Sir! if my niece is ever to marry you, she will have what you call uphill work of it in taking her place at starting. Yes, yes; this is not your view, but it remains, immovably remains, my view for all that. For my niece's sake, I claim that this uphill work shall be made as smooth as possible. Whatever material advantages she can have to help her, ought, in common justice, to be hers. Now, tell me, Mr. Vendale, on your fifteen hundred a year can your wife have a house in a fashionable quarter, a footman to open her door, a butler to wait at her table, and a carriage and horses to drive about in? I see the answer in your face—your face says, No.

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Very good. Tell me one more thing, and I have done. Take the mass of your educated, accomplished, and lovely countrywomen, is it, or is it not, the fact that a lady who has a house in a fashionable quarter, a footman to open her door, a butler to wait at her table, and a carriage and horses to drive about in, is a lady who has gained four steps, in female estimation, at starting? Yes? or No?"

"Come to the point," said Vendale. "You view this question as a question of terms. What are your terms?"

"The lowest terms, dear sir, on which you can provide your wife with those four steps at starting. Double your present income—the most rigid economy cannot do it in England on less. You said just now that you expected greatly to increase the value of your business. To work—and increase it! I am a good devil after all! On the day when you satisfy me, by plain proofs, that your income has risen to three thousand a year, ask me for my niece's hand, and it is yours."

"May I inquire if you have mentioned this arrangement to Miss Obenreizer?"

"Certainly. She has a last little morsel of regard still left for me, Mr. Vendale, which is not yours yet; and she accepts my terms. In other words, she submits to be guided by her guardian's regard for her welfare, and by her guardian's superior knowledge of the world." He threw himself back in his chair, in firm reliance on his position, and in full possession of his excellent temper.

Any open assertion of his own interests, in the situation in which Vendale was now placed, seemed to be (for the present at least) hopeless. He found himself literally left with no ground to stand on. Whether Obenreizer's objections were the genuine product of Obenreizer's own view of the case, or whether he was simply delaying the marriage in the hope of ultimately breaking it off altogether—in either of these events, any present resistance on Vendale's part would be equally useless. There was no help for it but to yield, making the best terms that he could on his own side.

"I protest against the conditions you impose on me," he began.

"Naturally," said Obenreizer; "I dare say I should protest, myself, in your place."

"Say, however," pursued Vendale, "that I accept your terms. In that case, I must be permitted to make two stipulations on my part. In the first place, I shall expect to be allowed to see your niece."

"Aha! to see my niece? and to make her in as great a hurry to be married as you are yourself? Suppose I say, No? you would see her perhaps without my permission?"

"Decidedly!"

"How delightfully frank! How exquisitely English! You shall see her, Mr. Vendale, on certain days, which we will appoint together. What next?"

"Your objection to my income," proceeded Vendale, "has taken me completely by surprise. I wish to be assured against any repetition of that surprise. Your present views of my qualification for marriage require me to have an income of three thousand a year. Can I be certain, in the future, as your experience of England enlarges, that your estimate will rise no higher?"

"In plain English," said Obenreizer, "you doubt my word?"

"Do you purpose to take *my* word for it when I inform you that I have doubled my income?" asked Vendale. "If my memory does not deceive me, you stipulated, a minute since, for plain proofs?"

"Well played, Mr. Vendale! You combine the foreign quickness with the English solidity. Accept my best congratulations. Accept, also, my written guarantee."

He rose; seated himself at a writing-desk at a side-table, wrote a few lines, and presented them to Vendale with a low bow. The engagement was perfectly explicit, and was signed and dated with scrupulous care.

"Are you satisfied with your guarantee?"

"I am satisfied."

"Charmed to hear it, I am sure. We have had our little skirmish—we have really been wonderfully clever on both sides. For the present our affairs are settled. I bear no malice. You bear no malice. Come, Mr. Vendale, a good English shake hands."

Vendale gave his hand, a little bewildered by Obenreizer's sudden transitions from one humour to another.

"When may I expect to see Miss Obenreizer again?" he asked, as he rose to go.

"Honour me with a visit to-morrow," said Obenreizer, "and we will settle it then. Do have a grog before you go! No? Well! well! we will reserve the grog till you have your three thousand a year, and are ready to be married. Aha! When will that be?"

"I made an estimate, some months since, of the capacities of my business," said Vendale. "If that estimate is correct, I shall double my present income——"

"And be married!" added Obenreizer.

"And be married," repeated Vendale, "within a year from this time. Good night."

VENDALE MAKES MISCHIEF.

When Vendale entered his office the next morning, the dull commercial routine at Cripple Corner met him with a new face. Marguerite had an interest in it now! The whole machinery which Wilding's death had set in motion, to realise the value of the business—the balancing of ledgers, the estimating of debts, the taking of stock, and the rest of it—was now transformed into machinery which indicated the chances for and against a speedy marriage. After looking over results, as presented by his accountant, and checking additions and subtractions, as rendered by the clerks, Vendale turned his attention to the stock-taking department next, and sent a message to the cellars, desiring to see the report.

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The Cellarman's appearance, the moment he put his head in at the door of his master's private room, suggested that something very extraordinary must have happened that morning. There was an approach to alacrity in Joey Ladle's movements! There was something which actually simulated cheerfulness in Joey Ladle's face!

"What's the matter?" asked Vendale. "Anything wrong?"

"I should wish to mention one thing," answered Joey. "Young Mr. Vendale, I have never set myself up for a prophet."

"Who ever said you did?"

"No prophet, as far as I've heard tell of that profession," proceeded Joey, "ever lived principally underground. No prophet, whatever else he might take in at the pores, ever took in wine from morning to night, for a number of years together. When I said to young Master Wilding, respecting his changing the name of the firm, that one of these days he might find he'd changed the luck of the firm—did I put myself forward as a prophet? No, I didn't. Has what I said to him come true? Yes, it has. In the time of Pebbleson Nephew, Young Mr. Vendale, no such thing was ever known as a mistake made in a consignment delivered at these doors. There's a mistake been made now. Please to remark that it happened before Miss Margaret came here. For which reason it don't go against what I've said respecting Miss Margaret singing round the luck. Read that, sir," concluded Joey, pointing attention to a special passage in the report, with a forefinger which appeared to be in process of taking in through the pores nothing more remarkable than dirt. "It's foreign to my nature to crow over the house I serve, but I feel it a kind of a solemn duty to ask you to read that."

Vendale read as follows:—"Note, respecting the Swiss champagne. An irregularity has been discovered in the last consignment received from the firm of Defresnier and Co." Vendale stopped, and referred to a memorandum-book by his side. "That was in Mr. Wilding's time," he said. "The vintage was a particularly good one, and he took the whole of it. The Swiss champagne has done very well, hasn't it?"

"I don't say it's done badly," answered the Cellarman. "It may have got sick in our customers' bins, or it may have bust in our customers' hands. But I don't say it's done badly with *us*."

Vendale resumed the reading of the note: "We find the number of the cases to be quite correct by the books. But six of them, which present a slight difference from the rest in the brand, have been opened, and have been found to contain a red wine instead of champagne. The similarity in the brands, we suppose, caused a mistake to be made in sending the consignment from Neuchâtel. The error has not been found to extend beyond six cases."

"Is that all!" exclaimed Vendale, tossing the note away from him.

Joey Ladle's eye followed the flying morsel of paper drearily.

"I'm glad to see you take it easy, sir," he said. "Whatever happens, it will be always a comfort to you to remember that you took it easy at first. Sometimes one mistake leads to another. A man drops a bit of orange-peel on the pavement by mistake, and another man treads on it by mistake, and there's a job at the hospital, and a party crippled for life. I'm glad you take it easy, sir. In Pebbleson Nephew's time we shouldn't have taken it easy till we had seen the end of it. Without desiring to crow over the house, Young Mr. Vendale, I wish you well through it. No offence, sir," said the Cellarman, opening the door to go out, and looking in again ominously before he shut it. "I'm muddled and molloncolly, I grant you. But I'm an old servant of Pebbleson Nephew, and I wish you well through them six cases of red wine."

Left by himself, Vendale laughed, and took up his pen. "I may as well send a line to Defresnier and Company," he thought, "before I forget it." He wrote at once in these terms:

"Dear Sirs. We are taking stock, and a trifling mistake has been discovered in the last consignment of champagne sent by your house to ours. Six of the cases contain red wine—which we hereby return to you. The matter can easily be set right, either by your sending us six cases of the champagne, if they can be produced, or, if not, by your crediting us with the value of six cases on the amount last paid (five hundred pounds) by our firm to yours. Your faithful servants,

"Wilding and Co."

This letter despatched to the post, the subject dropped at once out of Vendale's mind. He had other and far more interesting matters to think of. Later in the day he paid the visit to Obenreizer which had been agreed on between them. Certain evenings in the week were set apart which he was privileged to spend with Marguerite—always, however, in the presence of a third person. On this stipulation Obenreizer politely but positively insisted. The one concession he made was to give Vendale his choice of who the third person should be. Confiding in past experience, his choice fell unhesitatingly upon the excellent woman who mended Obenreizer's stockings. On hearing of the responsibility entrusted to her, Madame Dor's intellectual nature burst suddenly into a new stage of development. She waited till Obenreizer's eye was off her—and then she looked at Vendale, and dimly winked.

The time passed—the happy evenings with Marguerite came and went. It was the tenth morning since Vendale had written to the Swiss firm, when the answer appeared on his desk, with the other letters of the day:

"Dear Sirs. We beg to offer our excuses for the little mistake which has happened. At the same time, we regret to add that the statement of our error, with which you have favoured us, has led to a very unexpected discovery. The affair is a most serious one for you and for us. The particulars are as follows:

"Having no more champagne of the vintage last

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sent to you, we made arrangements to credit your firm with the value of the six cases, as suggested by yourself. On taking this step, certain forms observed in our mode of doing business necessitated a reference to our bankers' book, as well as to our ledger. The result is a moral certainty that no such remittance as you mention can have reached our house, and a literal certainty that no such remittance has been paid to our account at the bank.

"It is needless, at this stage of the proceedings, to trouble you with details. The money has unquestionably been stolen in the course of its transit from you to us. Certain peculiarities which we observe, relating to the manner in which the fraud has been perpetrated, lead us to conclude that the thief may have calculated on being able to pay the missing sum to our bankers, before an inevitable discovery followed the annual striking of our balance. This would not have happened, in the usual course, for another three months. During that period, but for your letter, we might have remained perfectly unconscious of the robbery that has been committed.

"We mention this last circumstance, as it may help to show you that we have to do, in this case, with no ordinary thief. Thus far we have not even a suspicion of who that thief is. But we believe you will assist us in making some advance towards discovery, by examining the receipt (forged, of course) which has no doubt purported to come to you from our house. Be pleased to look and see whether it is a receipt entirely in manuscript, or whether it is a numbered and printed form which merely requires the filling in of the amount. The settlement of this apparently trivial question is, we assure you, a matter of vital importance. Anxiously awaiting your reply, we remain, with high esteem and consideration,

"DEFRESNIER & CIE."

Vendale laid the letter on his desk, and waited a moment to steady his mind under the shock that had fallen on it. At the time of all others when it was most important to him to increase the value of his business, that business was threatened with a loss of five hundred pounds. He thought of Marguerite, as he took the key from his pocket and opened the iron chamber in the wall in which the books and papers of the firm were kept.

He was still in the chamber, searching for the forged receipt, when he was startled by a voice speaking close behind him.

"A thousand pardons," said the voice; "I am afraid I disturb you."

He turned, and found himself face to face with Marguerite's guardian.

"I have called," pursued Obenreizer, "to know if I can be of any use. Business of my own takes me away for some days to Manchester and Liverpool. Can I combine any business of yours with it? I am entirely at your disposal, in the character of commercial traveller for the firm of Wilding and Co."

"Excuse me for one moment," said Vendale; "I will speak to you directly." He turned round again, and continued his search among the papers. "You come at a time when friendly offers are more than usually precious to me," he resumed. "I have had very bad news this morning from Neuchâtel."

"Bad news!" exclaimed Obenreizer. "From Defresnier and Company?"

"Yes. A remittance we sent to them has been stolen. I am threatened with a loss of five hundred pounds. What's that?"

Turning sharply, and looking into the room for the second time, Vendale discovered his envelope-case overthrown on the floor, and Obenreizer on his knees picking up the contents.

"All my awkwardness!" said Obenreizer. "This dreadful news of yours startled me; I stepped back——" He became too deeply interested in collecting the scattered envelopes to finish the sentence.

"Don't trouble yourself," said Vendale. "The clerk will pick the things up."

"This dreadful news!" repeated Obenreizer, persisting in collecting the envelopes. "This dreadful news!"

"If you will read the letter," said Vendale, "you will find I have exaggerated nothing. There it is, open on my desk."

He resumed his search, and in a moment more discovered the forged receipt. It was on the numbered and printed form, described by the Swiss firm. Vendale made a memorandum of the number and the date. Having replaced the receipt and locked up the iron chamber, he had leisure to notice Obenreizer, reading the letter in the recess of a window at the far end of the room.

"Come to the fire," said Vendale. "You look perished with the cold out there. I will ring for some more coals."

Obenreizer rose, and came slowly back to the desk. "Marguerite will be as sorry to hear of this as I am," he said, kindly. "What do you mean to do?"

"I am in the hands of Defresnier and Company," answered Vendale. "In my total ignorance of the circumstances, I can only do what they recommend. The receipt which I have just found, turns out to be the numbered and printed form. They seem to attach some special importance to its discovery. You have had experience, when you were in the Swiss house, of their way of doing business. Can you guess what object they have in view?"

Obenreizer offered a suggestion.

"Suppose I examine the receipt?" he said.

"Are you ill?" asked Vendale, startled by the change in his face, which now showed itself plainly for the first time. "Pray go to the fire. You seem to be shivering—I hope you are not going to be ill?"

"Not I!" said Obenreizer. "Perhaps I have caught cold. Your English climate might have spared an admirer of your English institutions. Let me look at the receipt."

Vendale opened the iron chamber. Obenreizer took a chair, and drew it close to the fire. He held both hands over the flames. "Let me look at the receipt," he repeated, eagerly, as Vendale reappeared with the paper in his hand. At the same moment a porter entered the room with a fresh supply of coals. Vendale told him to make a good fire. The man obeyed the order with a disastrous alacrity. As he stepped forward and raised the scuttle, his foot caught in a fold of the rug, and he discharged his entire cargo of coals into the grate.

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The result was an instant smothering of the flame, and the production of a stream of yellow smoke, without a visible morsel of fire to account for it.

"Imbecile!" whispered Obenreizer to himself, with a look at the man which the man remembered for many a long day afterwards.

"Will you come into the clerks' room?" asked Vendale. "They have a stove there."

"No, no. No matter."

Vendale handed him the receipt. Obenreizer's interest in examining it appeared to have been quenched as suddenly and as effectually as the fire itself. He just glanced over the document, and said, "No; I don't understand it! I am sorry to be of no use."

"I will write to Neuchâtel by to-night's post," said Vendale, putting away the receipt for the second time. "We must wait, and see what comes of it."

"By to-night's post," repeated Obenreizer. "Let me see. You will get the answer in eight or nine days' time. I shall be back before that. If I can be of any service, as commercial traveller, perhaps you will let me know between this and then. You will send me written instructions? My best thanks. I shall be most anxious for your answer from Neuchâtel. Who knows? It may be a mistake, my dear friend, after all. Courage! courage! courage!" He had entered the room with no appearance of being pressed for time. He now snatched up his hat, and took his leave with the air of a man who had not another moment to lose.

Left by himself, Vendale took a turn thoughtfully in the room.

His previous impression of Obenreizer was shaken by what he had heard and seen at the interview which had just taken place. He was disposed, for the first time, to doubt whether, in this case, he had not been a little hasty and hard in his judgment on another man. Obenreizer's surprise and regret, on hearing the news from Neuchâtel, bore the plainest marks of being honestly felt—not politely assumed for the occasion. With troubles of his own to encounter, suffering, to all appearance, from the first insidious attack of a serious illness, he had looked and spoken like a man who really deplored the disaster that had fallen on his friend. Hitherto, Vendale had tried vainly to alter his first opinion of Marguerite's guardian, for Marguerite's sake. All the generous instincts in his nature now combined together and shook the evidence which had seemed unanswerable up to this time. "Who knows?" he thought, "I may have read that man's face wrongly, after all."

The time passed—the happy evenings with Marguerite came and went. It was again the tenth morning since Vendale had written to the Swiss firm; and again the answer appeared on his desk with the other letters of the day:

"Dear Sir. My senior partner, M. Defresnier, has been called away, by urgent business, to Milan. In his absence (and with his full concurrence and authority), I now write to you again on the subject of the missing five hundred pounds.

"Your discovery that the forged receipt is executed upon one of our numbered and printed forms has caused inexpressible surprise and distress to my partner and to myself. At the time when your remittance was stolen, but three keys were in existence opening the strong box in which our receipt-forms are invariably kept. My partner had one key; I had the other. The third was in the possession of a gentleman who, at that period, occupied a position of trust in our house. We should as soon have thought of suspecting one of ourselves as of suspecting this person. Suspicion now points at him, nevertheless. I cannot prevail on myself to inform you who the person is, so long as there is the shadow of a chance that he may come innocently out of the inquiry which must now be instituted. Forgive my silence; the motive of it is good.

"The form our investigation must now take is simple enough. The handwriting on your receipt must be compared, by competent persons whom we have at our disposal, with certain specimens of handwriting in our possession. I cannot send you the specimens, for business reasons, which, when you hear them, you are sure to approve. I must beg you to send me the receipt to Neuchâtel—and, in making this request, I must accompany it by a word of necessary warning.

"If the person, at whom suspicion now points, really proves to be the person who has committed this forgery and theft, I have reason to fear that circumstances may have already put him on his guard. The only evidence against him is the evidence in your hands, and he will move heaven and earth to obtain and destroy it. I strongly urge you not to trust the receipt to the post. Send it to me, without loss of time, by a private hand, and choose nobody for your messenger but a person long established in your own employment, accustomed to travelling, capable of speaking French; a man of courage, a man of honesty, and, above all things, a man who can be trusted to let no stranger scrape acquaintance with him on the route. Tell no one—absolutely no one—but your messenger of the turn this matter has now taken. The safe transit of the receipt may depend on your interpreting *literally* the advice which I give you at the end of this letter.

"I have only to add that every possible saving of time is now of the last importance. More than one of our receipt-forms is missing—and it is impossible to say what new frauds may not be committed, if we fail to lay our hands on the thief.

"Your faithful servant.

"ROLLAND,

"(Signing for Defresnier and Cie)."

Who was the suspected man? In Vendale's position, it seemed useless to inquire.

Who was to be sent to Neuchâtel with the receipt? Men of courage and men of honesty were to be had at Cripple Corner for the asking. But where was the man who was accustomed to foreign travelling, who could speak the French language, and who could be really relied on to let no stranger scrape acquaintance with him on his route? There was but one man at hand who combined all those requisites in his own person, and that man was Vendale himself.

It was a sacrifice to leave his business; it was a greater sacrifice to leave Marguerite. But a matter of five hundred pounds was in-

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volved in the pending inquiry; and a literal interpretation of M. Rolland's advice was insisted on in terms which there was no trifling with. The more Vendale thought of it, the more plainly the necessity faced him, and said, "Go!"

As he locked up the letter with the receipt, the association of ideas reminded him of Obenreizer. A guess at the identity of the suspected man looked more possible now. Obenreizer might know.

The thought had barely passed through his mind, when the door opened, and Obenreizer entered the room.

"They told me at Soho-square you were expected back last night," said Vendale, greeting him. "Have you done well in the country? Are you better?"

A thousand thanks. Obenreizer had done admirably well; Obenreizer was infinitely better. And now, what news? Any letter from Neuchâtel?

"A very strange letter," answered Vendale. "The matter has taken a new turn, and the letter insists—without excepting anybody—on my keeping our next proceedings a profound secret."

"Without excepting anybody?" repeated Obenreizer. As he said the words, he walked away again, thoughtfully, to the window at the other end of the room, looked out for a moment, and suddenly came back to Vendale. "Surely they must have forgotten?" he resumed, "or they would have excepted *me?*"

"It is Monsieur Rolland who writes," said Vendale. "And, as you say, he must certainly have forgotten. That view of the matter quite escaped me. I was just wishing I had you to consult, when you came into the room. And here I am tied by a formal prohibition, which cannot possibly have been intended to include you. How very annoying!"

Obenreizer's filmy eyes fixed on Vendale attentively.

"Perhaps it is more than annoying!" he said. "I came this morning not only to hear the news, but to offer myself as messenger, negotiator—what you will. Would you believe it? I have letters which oblige me to go to Switzerland immediately. Messages, documents, anything—I could have taken them all to Defresnier and Rolland for you."

"You are the very man I wanted," returned Vendale. "I had decided, most unwillingly, on going to Neuchâtel myself, not five minutes since, because I could find no one here capable of taking my place. Let me look at the letter again."

He opened the strong room to get at the letter. Obenreizer, after first glancing round him to make sure that they were alone, followed a step or two and waited, measuring Vendale with his eye. Vendale was the tallest man, and unmistakably the strongest man also of the two. Obenreizer turned away, and warmed himself at the fire.

Meanwhile, Vendale read the last paragraph in the letter for the third time. There was the plain warning—there was the closing sentence, which insisted on a literal interpretation of it. The hand, which was leading Vendale in the dark, led him on that condition only. A large sum was at stake: a terrible suspicion remained to be verified. If he acted on his own responsibility, and if anything happened to defeat the object in view, who would be blamed? As a man of business, Vendale had but one course to follow. He locked the letter up again.

"It is most annoying," he said to Obenreizer—"it is a piece of forgetfulness on Monsieur Rolland's part which puts me to serious inconvenience, and places me in an absurdly false position towards you. What am I to do? I am acting in a very serious matter, and acting entirely in the dark. I have no choice but to be guided, not by the spirit, but by the letter of my instructions. You understand me, I am sure? You know, if I had not been fettered in this way, how gladly I should have accepted your services?"

"Say no more!" returned Obenreizer. "In your place I should have done the same. My good friend, I take no offence. I thank you for your compliment. We shall be travelling companions, at any rate," added Obenreizer. "You go, as I go, at once?"

"At once. I must speak to Marguerite first, of course!"

"Surely! surely! Speak to her this evening. Come, and pick me up on the way to the station. We go together by the mail train to-night?"

"By the mail train to-night."

It was later than Vendale had anticipated when he drove up to the house in Soho-square. Business difficulties, occasioned by his sudden departure, had presented themselves by dozens. A cruelly large share of the time which he had hoped to devote to Marguerite had been claimed by duties at his office which it was impossible to neglect.

To his surprise and delight, she was alone in the drawing-room when he entered it.

"We have only a few minutes, George," she said. "But Madame Dor has been good to me—and we can have those few minutes alone." She threw her arms round his neck, and whispered eagerly, "Have you done anything to offend Mr. Obenreizer?"

"I!" exclaimed Vendale, in amazement.

"Hush!" she said, "I want to whisper it. "You know the little photograph I have got of you. This afternoon it happened to be on the chimney-piece. He took it up and looked at it—and I saw his face in the glass. I know you have offended him! He is merciless; he is revengeful; he is as secret as the grave. Don't go with him, George—don't go with him!"

"My own love," returned Vendale, "you are letting your fancy frighten you! Obenreizer and I were never better friends than we are at this moment."

Before a word more could be said, the sudden movement of some ponderous body shook the floor of the next room. The shock was fol-

lowed by the appearance of Madame Dor. "Obenreizer!" exclaimed this excellent person in a whisper, and plumped down instantly in her regular place by the stove.

Obenreizer came in with a courier's bag strapped over his shoulder.

"Are you ready?" he asked, addressing Vendale. "Can I take anything for you? You have no travelling-bag. I have got one. Here is the compartment for papers, open at your service."

"Thank you," said Vendale. "I have only one paper of importance with me; and that paper I am bound to take charge of myself. Here it is," he added, touching the breast-pocket of his coat, "and here it must remain till we get to Neuchâtel."

As he said those words, Marguerite's hand caught his, and pressed it significantly. She was looking towards Obenreizer. Before Vendale could look, in his turn, Obenreizer had wheeled round, and was taking leave of Madame Dor.

"Adieu, my charming niece!" he said, turning to Marguerite next. "En route, my friend, for Neuchâtel!" He tapped Vendale lightly over the breast-pocket of his coat, and led the way to the door.

Vendale's last look was for Marguerite. Marguerite's last words to him were, "Don't go!"

ACT III.

IN THE VALLEY.

It was about the middle of the month of February when Vendale and Obenreizer set forth on their expedition. The winter being a hard one, the time was bad for travellers. So bad was it that these two travellers, coming to Strasbourg, found its great inns almost empty. And even the few people they did encounter in that city, who had started from England or from Paris on business journeys towards the interior of Switzerland, were turning back.

Many of the railroads in Switzerland that tourists pass easily enough now, were almost or quite impracticable then. Some were not begun; more were not completed. On such as were open, there were still large gaps of old road where communication in the winter season was often stopped; on others, there were weak points where the new work was not safe, either under conditions of severe frost, or of rapid thaw. The running of trains on this last class was not to be counted on in the worst time of the year, was contingent upon weather, or was wholly abandoned through the months considered the most dangerous.

At Strasbourg there were more travellers' stories afloat, respecting the difficulties of the way further on, than there were travellers to relate them. Many of these tales were as wild as usual; but the more modestly marvellous did derive some colour from the circumstance that people were indisputably turning back. However, as the road to Basle was open, Vendale's resolution to push on was in no wise disturbed. Obenreizer's resolution was necessarily Vendale's, seeing that he stood at bay thus desperately:—He must be ruined, or must destroy the evidence that Vendale carried about him, even if he destroyed Vendale with it.

The state of mind of each of these two fellow-travellers towards the other was this. Obenreizer, encircled by impending ruin through Vendale's quickness of action, and seeing the circle narrowed every hour by Vendale's energy, hated him with the animosity of a fierce cunning lower animal. He had always had instinctive movements in his breast against him; perhaps, because of that old sore of gentleman and peasant; perhaps, because of the openness of his nature; perhaps, because of his better looks; perhaps, because of his success with Marguerite; perhaps, on all those grounds, the two last not the least. And now he saw in him, besides, the hunter who was tracking him down. Vendale, on the other hand, always contending generously against his first vague mistrust, now felt bound to contend against it more than ever: reminding himself, "He is Marguerite's guardian. We are on perfectly friendly terms; he is my companion of his own proposal, and can have no interested motive in sharing this undesirable journey." To which pleas in behalf of Obenreizer, chance added one consideration more, when they came to Basle, after a journey of more than twice the average duration.

They had had a late dinner, and were alone in an inn room there, overhanging the Rhine: at that place rapid and deep, swollen and loud. Vendale lounged upon a couch, and Obenreizer walked to and fro: now, stopping at the window, looking at the crooked reflections of the town lights in the dark water (and peradventure thinking, "If I could fling him into it!"); now, resuming his walk with his eyes upon the floor.

"Where shall I rob him, if I can? Where shall I murder him, if I must?" So, as he paced the room, ran the river, ran the river, ran the river.

The burden seemed to him at last, to be growing so plain that he stopped; thinking it as well to suggest another burden to his companion.

"The Rhine sounds to-night," he said with a smile, "like the old waterfall at home. That waterfall which my mother showed to travellers (I told you of it once). The sound of it changed with the weather, as does the sound of all falling waters and flowing waters. When I was pupil of the watchmaker, I remembered it as sometimes saying to me for whole days, 'Who are you, my little wretch? Who are you, my little wretch?' I remembered it as saying, other times, when its sound was hollow, and storm was coming up the Pass: 'Boom, boom, boom. Beat him, beat him, beat him.' Like my mother enraged—if she was my mother."

"If she was?" said Vendale, gradually changing his attitude to a sitting one. "If she was? Why do you say 'if'?"

"What do I know?" replied the other negligently, throwing up his hands and letting them fall as they would. "What would you have? I am so obscurely born, that how can I say? I

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was very young, and all the rest of the family were men and women, and my so-called parents were old. Anything is possible of a case like that?"

"Did you ever doubt——?"

"I told you once, I doubt the marriage of those two," he replied, throwing up his hands again, as if he were throwing the unprofitable subject away. "But here I am in Creation. *I* come of no fine family. What does it matter?"

"At least you are Swiss," said Vendale, after following him with his eyes to and fro.

"How do I know?" he retorted abruptly, and stopping to look back over his shoulder. "I say to you, at least you are English. How do you know?"

"By what I have been told from infancy."

"Ah! I know of myself that way."

"And," added Vendale, pursuing the thought that he could not drive back, "by my earliest recollections."

"I also. I know of myself that way—if that way satisfies."

"Does it not satisfy you?"

"It must. There is nothing like 'it must' in this little world. It must. Two short words those, but stronger than long proof or reasoning."

"You and poor Wilding were born in the same year. You were nearly of an age," said Vendale, again thoughtfully looking after him as he resumed his pacing up and down.

"Yes. Very nearly."

Could Obenreizer be the missing man? In the unknown associations of things, was there a subtler meaning than he himself thought, in that theory so often on his lips about the smallness of the world? Had the Swiss letter presenting him, followed so close on Mrs. Goldstraw's revelation concerning the infant who had been taken away to Switzerland, because he was that infant grown a man? In a world where so many depths lie unsounded, it might be. The chances, or the laws—call them either—that had wrought out the revival of Vendale's own acquaintance with Obenreizer, and had ripened it into intimacy, and had brought them here together this present winter night, were hardly less curious; while read by such a light, they were seen to cohere towards the furtherance of a continuous and an intelligible purpose.

Vendale's awakened thoughts ran high while his eyes musingly followed Obenreizer pacing up and down the room, the river ever running to the tune: "Where shall I rob him, if I can? Where shall I murder him, if I must?" The secret of his dead friend was in no hazard from Vendale's lips; but just as his friend had died of its weight, so did he in his lighter succession feel the burden of the trust, and the obligation to follow any clue, however obscure. He rapidly asked himself, would he like this man to be the real Wilding? No. Argue down his mistrust as he might, he was unwilling to put such a substitute in the place of his late guileless, outspoken, childlike partner. He rapidly asked himself, would he like this man to be rich? No. He had more power than enough over Marguerite as it was, and wealth might invest him with more. Would he like this man to be Marguerite's Guardian, and yet proved to stand in no degree of relationship towards her, however disconnected and distant? No. But these were not considerations to come between him and fidelity to the dead. Let him see to it that they passed him with no other notice than the knowledge that they *had* passed him, and left him bent on the discharge of a solemn duty. And he did see to it, so soon that he followed his companion with ungrudging eyes, while he still paced the room; that companion, whom he supposed to be moodily reflecting on his own birth, and not on another man's—least of all what man's—violent Death.

The road in advance from Basle to Neuchâtel was better than had been represented. The latest weather had done it good. Drivers, both of horses and mules, had come in that evening after dark, and had reported nothing more difficult to be overcome than trials of patience, harness, wheels, axles, and whipcord. A bargain was soon struck for a carriage and horses, to take them on in the morning, and to start before daylight.

"Do you lock your door at night when travelling?" asked Obenreizer, standing warming his hands by the wood fire in Vendale's chamber, before going to his own.

"Not I. I sleep too soundly."

"You are so sound a sleeper?" he retorted, with an admiring look. "What a blessing!"

"Anything but a blessing to the rest of the house," rejoined Vendale, "if I had to be knocked up in the morning from the outside of my bedroom door."

"I, too," said Obenreizer, "leave open my room. But let me advise you, as a Swiss who knows: always, when you travel in my country, put your papers—and, of course, your money—under your pillow. Always the same place."

"You are not complimentary to your countrymen," laughed Vendale.

"My countrymen," said Obenreizer, with that light touch of his friend's elbows by way of Good Night and benediction, "I suppose, are like the majority of men. And the majority of men will take what they can get. Adieu! At four in the morning."

"Adieu! At four."

Left to himself, Vendale raked the logs together, sprinkled over them the white wood-ashes lying on the hearth, and sat down to compose his thoughts. But they still ran high on their latest theme, and the running of the river tended to agitate rather than to quiet them. As he sat thinking, what little disposition he had had to sleep, departed. He felt it hopeless to lie down yet, and sat dressed by the fire. Marguerite, Wilding, Obenreizer, the business he was then upon, and a thousand hopes and doubts that had nothing to do with it, occupied his mind at once. Everything seemed to have power over him, but slumber. The departed disposition to sleep kept far away.

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He had sat for a long time thinking, on the hearth, when his candle burned down, and its light went out. It was of little moment; there was light enough in the fire. He changed his attitude, and, leaning his arm on the chair-back, and his chin upon that hand, sat thinking still.

But he sat between the fire and the bed, and, as the fire flickered in the play of air from the fast-flowing river, his enlarged shadow fluttered on the white wall by the bedside. His attitude gave it an air, half of mourning, and half of bending over the bed imploring. His eyes were observant of it, when he became troubled by the disagreeable fancy that it was like Wilding's shadow, and not his own.

A slight change of place would cause it to disappear. He made the change, and the apparition of his disturbed fancy vanished. He now sat in the shade of a little nook beside the fire, and the door of the room was before him.

It had a long cumbrous iron latch. He saw the latch slowly and softly rise. The door opened a very little, and came to again: as though only the air had moved it. But he saw that the latch was out of the hasp.

The door opened again very slowly, until it opened wide enough to admit some one. It afterwards remained still for a while, as though cautiously held open on the other side. The figure of a man then entered, with its face turned towards the bed, and stood quiet just within the door. Until it said, in a low half-whisper, at the same time taking one step forward: "Vendale!"

"What now?" he answered, springing from his seat; "who is it?"

It was Obenreizer, and he uttered a cry of surprise as Vendale came upon him from that unexpected direction. "Not in bed?" he said, catching him by both shoulders with an instinctive tendency to a struggle, "Then something *is* wrong!"

"What do you mean?" said Vendale, releasing himself.

"First tell me; you are not ill?"

"Ill? No."

"I have had a bad dream about you. How is it that I see you up and dressed?"

"My good fellow, I may as well ask you how is it that I see *you* up and undressed."

"I have told you why. I have had a bad dream about you. I tried to rest after it, but it was impossible. I could not make up my mind to stay where I was, without knowing you were safe; and yet I could not make up my mind to come in here. I have been minutes hesitating at the door. It is so easy to laugh at a dream that you have not dreamed. Where is your candle?"

"Burnt out."

"I have a whole one in my room. Shall I fetch it?"

"Do so."

His room was very near, and he was absent for but a few seconds. Coming back with the candle in his hand, he kneeled down on the hearth and lighted it. As he blew with his breath a charred billet into flame for the purpose, Vendale, looking down at him, saw that his lips were white and not easy of control.

"Yes!" said Obenreizer, setting the lighted candle on the table, "it was a bad dream. Only look at me!"

His feet were bare; his red-flannel shirt was thrown back at the throat, and its sleeves were rolled above the elbows; his only other garment, a pair of under pantaloons or drawers, reaching to the ankles, fitted him close and tight. A certain lithe and savage appearance was on his figure, and his eyes were very bright.

"If there had been a wrestle with a robber, as I dreamed," said Obenreizer, "you see, I was stripped for it."

"And armed, too," said Vendale, glancing at his girdle.

"A traveller's dagger, that I always carry on the road," he answered carelessly, half drawing it from its sheath with his left hand, and putting it back again. "Do you carry no such thing?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"No pistols?" said Obenreizer, glancing at the table, and from it to the untouched pillow.

"Nothing of the sort."

"You Englishmen are so confident! You wish to sleep?"

"I have wished to sleep this long time, but I can't do it."

"I neither, after the bad dream. My fire has gone the way of your candle. May I come and sit by yours? Two o'clock! It will so soon be four, that it is not worth the trouble to go to bed again."

"I shall not take the trouble to go to bed at all, now," said Vendale; "sit here and keep me company, and welcome."

Going back to his room to arrange his dress, Obenreizer soon returned in a loose cloak and slippers, and they sat down on opposite sides of the hearth. In the interval, Vendale had replenished the fire from the wood-basket in his room, and Obenreizer had put upon the table a flask and cup from his.

"Common cabaret brandy, I am afraid," he said, pouring out; "bought upon the road, and not like yours from Cripple Corner. But yours is exhausted; so much the worse. A cold night, a cold time of night, a cold country, and a cold house. This may be better than nothing; try it."

Vendale took the cup, and did so.

"How do you find it?"

"It has a coarse after-flavour," said Vendale, giving back the cup with a slight shudder, "and I don't like it."

"You are right," said Obenreizer, tasting, and smacking his lips; "it *has* a coarse after-flavour, and *I* don't like it. Booh! it burns, though!" He had flung what remained in the cup, upon the fire.

Each of them leaned an elbow on the table, reclined his head upon his hand, and sat looking at the flaring logs. Obenreizer remained watchful and still; but Vendale, after certain nervous twitches and starts, in one of which he rose to his feet and looked wildly about him, fell into the strangest confusion of dreams. He carried his papers in a leather case or pocket-book, in

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an inner breast-pocket of his buttoned travelling coat; and whatever he dreamed of, in the lethargy that got possession of him, something importunate in these papers called him out of that dream, though he could not wake from it. He was belated on the steppes of Russia (some shadowy person gave that name to the place) with Marguerite; and yet the sensation of a hand at his breast, softly feeling the outline of the pocket-book as he lay asleep before the fire, was present to him. He was shipwrecked in an open boat at sea, and having lost his clothes, had no other covering than an old sail; and yet a creeping hand, tracing outside all the other pockets of the dress he actually wore, for papers, and finding none answer its touch, warned him to rouse himself. He was in the ancient vault at Cripple Corner, to which was transferred the very bed substantial and present in that very room at Basle; and Wilding (not dead, as he had supposed, and yet he did not wonder much) shook him, and whispered, "Look at that man! Don't you see he has risen, and is turning the pillow? Why should he turn the pillow, if not to seek those papers that are in your breast? Awake!" And yet he slept, and wandered off into other dreams.

Watchful and still, with his elbow on the table and his head upon that hand, his companion at length said: "Vendale! We are called. Past Four!" Then, opening his eyes, he saw, turned sideways on him, the filmy face of Obenreizer.

"You have been in a heavy sleep," he said. "The fatigue of constant travelling and the cold!"

"I am broad awake now," cried Vendale, springing up, but with an unsteady footing. "Haven't you slept at all?"

"I may have dozed, but I seem to have been patiently looking at the fire. Whether or no, we must wash, and breakfast, and turn out. Past four, Vendale; past four!"

It was said in a tone to rouse him, for already he was half asleep again. In his preparation for the day, too, and at his breakfast, he was often virtually asleep while in mechanical action. It was not until the cold dark day was closing in, that he had any distincter impressions of the ride than jingling bells, bitter weather, slipping horses, frowning hill-sides, bleak woods, and a stoppage at some wayside house of entertainment, where they had passed through a cowhouse to reach the travellers' room above. He had been conscious of little more, except of Obenreizer sitting thoughtful at his side all day, and eyeing him much.

But when he shook off his stupor, Obenreizer was not at his side. The carriage was stopping to bait at another wayside house; and a line of long narrow carts, laden with casks of wine, and drawn by horses with a quantity of blue collar and head-gear, were baiting too. These came from the direction in which the travellers were going, and Obenreizer (not thoughtful now, but cheerful and alert) was talking with the foremost driver. As Vendale stretched his limbs, circulated his blood, and cleared off the lees of his lethargy, with a sharp run to and fro in the bracing air, the line of carts moved on: the drivers all saluting Obenreizer as they passed him.

"Who are those?" asked Vendale.

"They are our carriers—Defresnier and Company's," replied Obenreizer. "Those are our casks of wine." He was singing to himself, and lighting a cigar.

"I have been drearily dull company to-day," said Vendale. "I don't know what has been the matter with me."

"You had no sleep last night; and a kind of brain-congestion frequently comes, at first, of such cold," said Obenreizer. "I have seen it often. After all, we shall have our journey for nothing, it seems."

"How for nothing?"

"The House is at Milan. You know, we are a Wine House at Neuchâtel, and a Silk House at Milan? Well, Silk happening to press of a sudden, more than Wine, Defresnier was summoned to Milan. Rolland, the other partner, has been taken ill since his departure, and the doctors will allow him to see no one. A letter awaits you at Neuchâtel to tell you so. I have it from our chief carrier whom you saw me talking with. He was surprised to see me, and said he had that word for you if he met you. What do you do? Go back?'

"Go on," said Vendale.

"On?"

"On? Yes. Across the Alps, and down to Milan."

Obenreizer stopped in his smoking to look at Vendale, and then smoked heavily, looked up the road, looked down the road, looked down at the stones in the road at his feet.

"I have a very serious matter in charge," said Vendale; "more of these missing forms may be turned to as bad account, or worse; I am urged to lose no time in helping the House to take the thief; and nothing shall turn me back."

"No?" cried Obenreizer, taking out his cigar to smile, and giving his hand to his fellow-traveller. "Then nothing shall turn *me* back. Ho, driver! Despatch. Quick there! Let us push on!"

They travelled through the night. There had been snow, and there was a partial thaw, and they mostly travelled at a foot-pace, and always with many stoppages to breathe the splashed and floundering horses. After an hour's broad daylight, they drew rein at the inn-door at Neuchâtel, having been some eight-and-twenty hours in conquering some eighty English miles.

When they had hurriedly refreshed and changed, they went together to the house of business of Defresnier and Company. There they found the letter which the wine-carrier had described, enclosing the tests and comparisons of hand-writing essential to the discovery of the Forger. Vendale's determination to press forward, without resting, being already taken, the only question to delay them was by what Pass could they cross the Alps? Respecting the state of the two Passes of the

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St. Gotthard and the Simplon, the guides and mule-drivers differed greatly; and both Passes were still far enough off, to prevent the travellers from having the benefit of any recent experience of either. Besides which, they well knew that a fall of snow might altogether change the described conditions in a single hour, even if they were correctly stated. But, on the whole, the Simplon appearing to be the hopefuller route, Vendale decided to take it. Obenreizer bore little or no part in the discussion, and scarcely spoke.

To Geneva, to Lausanne, along the level margin of the lake to Vevay, so into the winding valley between the spurs of the mountains, and into the valley of the Rhone. The sound of the carriage-wheels, as they rattled on, through the day, through the night, became as the wheels of a great clock, recording the hours. No change of weather varied the journey, after it had hardened into a sullen frost. In a sombre-yellow sky, they saw the Alpine ranges; and they saw enough of snow on nearer and much lower hill-tops and hill-sides, to sully, by contrast, the purity of lake, torrent, and waterfall, and make the villages look discoloured and dirty. But no snow fell, nor was there any snow-drift on the road. The stalking along the valley of more or less of white mist, changing on their hair and dress into icicles, was the only variety between them and the gloomy sky. And still by day, and still by night, the wheels. And still they rolled, in the hearing of one of them, to the burden, altered from the burden of the Rhine: "The time is gone for robbing him alive, and I must murder him."

They came, at length, to the poor little town of Brieg, at the foot of the Simplon. They came there after dark, but yet could see how dwarfed men's works and men became with the immense mountains towering over them. Here they must lie for the night; and here was warmth of fire, and lamp, and dinner, and wine, and after-conference resounding, with guides and drivers. No human creature had come across the Pass for four days. The snow above the snow-line was too soft for wheeled carriage, and not hard enough for sledge. There was snow in the sky. There had been snow in the sky for days past, and the marvel was that it had not fallen, and the certainty was that it must fall. No vehicle could cross. The journey might be tried on mules, or it might be tried on foot; but the best guides must be paid danger-price in either case, and that, too, whether they succeeded in taking the two travellers across, or turned for safety and brought them back.

In this discussion, Obenreizer bore no part whatever. He sat silently smoking by the fire until the room was cleared and Vendale referred to him.

"Bah! I am weary of these poor devils and their trade," he said, in reply. "Always the same story. It is the story of their trade to-day, as it was the story of their trade when I was a ragged boy. What do you and I want? We want a knapsack each, and a mountain-staff each. We want no guide; we should guide him; he would not guide us. We leave our portmanteaus here, and we cross together. We have been on the mountains together before now, and I am mountain-born, and I know this Pass—Pass!—rather High Road!—by heart. We will leave these poor devils, in pity, to trade with others; but they must not delay us to make a pretence of earning money. Which is all they mean."

Vendale, glad to be quit of the dispute, and to cut the knot: active, adventurous, bent on getting forward, and therefore very susceptible to the last hint: readily assented. Within two hours, they had purchased what they wanted for the expedition, had packed their knapsacks, and lay down to sleep.

At break of day, they found half the town collected in the narrow street to see them depart. The people talked together in groups; the guides and drivers whispered apart, and looked up at the sky; no one wished them a good journey.

As they began the ascent, a gleam of sun shone from the otherwise unaltered sky, and for a moment turned the tin spires of the town to silver.

"A good omen!" said Vendale (though it died out while he spoke). "Perhaps our example will open the Pass on this side."

"No; we shall not be followed," returned Obenreizer, looking up at the sky and back at the valley. "We shall be alone up yonder."

ON THE MOUNTAIN.

The road was fair enough for stout walkers, and the air grew lighter and easier to breathe as the two ascended. But the settled gloom remained as it had remained for days back. Nature seemed to have come to a pause. The sense of hearing, no less than the sense of sight, was troubled by having to wait so long for the change, whatever it might be, that impended. The silence was as palpable and heavy as the lowering clouds—or rather cloud, for there seemed to be but one in all the sky, and that one covering the whole of it.

Although the light was thus dismally shrouded, the prospect was not obscured. Down in the valley of the Rhône behind them, the stream could be traced through all its many windings, oppressively sombre and solemn in its one leaden hue, a colourless waste. Far and high above them, glaciers and suspended avalanches overhung the spots where they must pass by-and-by; deep and dark below them on their right, were awful precipice and roaring torrent; tremendous mountains arose in every vista. The gigantic landscape, uncheered by a touch of changing light or a solitary ray of sun, was yet terribly distinct in its ferocity. The hearts of two lonely men might shrink a little, if they had to win their way for miles and hours among a legion of silent and motionless men—mere men like themselves—all looking at them with fixed and frowning front. But how much more, when the legion is of Nature's mightiest

works, and the frown may turn to fury in an instant!

As they ascended, the road became gradually more rugged and difficult. But the spirits of Vendale rose as they mounted higher, leaving so much more of the road behind them conquered. Obenreizer spoke little, and held on with a determined purpose. Both, in respect of agility and endurance, were well qualified for the expedition. Whatever the born mountaineer read in the weather-tokens, that was illegible to the other, he kept to himself.

"Shall we get across to-day?" asked Vendale.

"No," replied the other. "You see how much deeper the snow lies here than it lay half a league lower. The higher we mount, the deeper the snow will lie. Walking is half wading even now. And the days are so short! If we get as high as the fifth Refuge, and lie to-night at the Hospice, we shall do well."

"Is there no danger of the weather rising in the night," asked Vendale, anxiously, "and snowing us up?"

"There is danger enough about us," said Obenreizer, with a cautious glance onward and upward, "to render silence our best policy. You have heard of the Bridge of the Ganther?"

"I have crossed it once."

"In the summer?"

"Yes; in the travelling season."

"Yes; but it is another thing at this season;" with a sneer, as though he were out of temper. "This is not a time of year, or a state of things, on an Alpine Pass, that you gentlemen holiday-travellers know much about."

"You are my Guide," said Vendale, good humouredly. "I trust to you."

"I am your Guide," said Obenreizer, "and I will guide you to your journey's end. There is the Bridge before us."

They had made a turn into a desolate and dismal ravine, where the snow lay deep below them, deep above them, deep on every side. While speaking, Obenreizer stood pointing at the Bridge, and observing Vendale's face, with a very singular expression on his own.

"If I, as Guide, had sent you over there, in advance, and encouraged you to give a shout or two, you might have brought down upon yourself tons and tons and tons of snow, that would not only have struck you dead, but buried you deep, at a blow."

"No doubt," said Vendale.

"No doubt. But that is not what I have to do, as Guide. So pass silently. Or, going as we go, our indiscretion might else crush and bury *me*. Let us get on!"

There was a great accumulation of snow on the Bridge; and such enormous accumulations of snow overhung them from projecting masses of rock, that they might have been making their way through a stormy sky of white clouds. Using his staff skilfully, sounding as he went, and looking upward, with bent shoulders, as it were to resist the mere idea of a fall from above, Obenreizer softly led. Vendale closely followed. They were yet in the midst of their dangerous way, when there came a mighty rush, followed by a sound as of thunder. Obenreizer clapped his hand on Vendale's mouth and pointed to the track behind them. Its aspect had been wholly changed in a moment. An avalanche had swept over it, and plunged into the torrent at the bottom of the gulf below.

Their appearance at the solitary Inn not far beyond this terrible Bridge, elicited many expressions of astonishment from the people shut up in the house. "We stay but to rest," said Obenreizer, shaking the snow from his dress at the fire. "This gentleman has very pressing occasion to get across;—tell them, Vendale."

"Assuredly, I have very pressing occasion. I must cross."

"You hear, all of you. My friend has very pressing occasion to get across, and we want no advice and no help. I am as good a guide, my fellow-countrymen, as any of you. Now, give us to eat and drink."

In exactly the same way, and in nearly the same words, when it was coming on dark and they had struggled through the greatly increased difficulties of the road, and had at last reached their destination for the night, Obenreizer said to the astonished people of the Hospice, gathering about them at the fire, while they were yet in the act of getting their wet shoes off, and shaking the snow from their clothes:

"It is well to understand one another, friends all. This gentleman——"

—"Has," said Vendale, readily taking him up with a smile, "very pressing occasion to get across. Must cross."

"You hear?—has very pressing occasion to get across, must cross. We want no advice and no help. I am mountain-born, and act as Guide. Do not worry us by talking about it, but let us have supper, and wine, and bed."

All through the intense cold of the night, the same awful stillness. Again at sunrise, no sunny tinge to gild or redden the snow. The same interminable waste of deathly white; the same immovable air; the same monotonous gloom in the sky.

"Travellers!" a friendly voice called to them from the door, after they were afoot, knapsack on back and staff in hand, as yesterday: "recollect! There are five places of shelter, near together, on the dangerous road before you; and there is the wooden cross, and there is the next Hospice. Do not stray from the track. If the *Tourmente* comes on, take shelter instantly!"

"The trade of these poor devils!" said Obenreizer to his friend, with a contemptuous backward wave of his hand towards the voice. "How they stick to their trade! You Englishmen say we Swiss are mercenary. Truly, it does look like it."

They had divided between the two knapsacks, such refreshments as they had been able to obtain that morning, and as they deemed it prudent to take. Obenreizer carried the wine as his share of the burden; Vendale, the bread and meat and cheese, and the flask of brandy.

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They had for some time laboured upward and onward through the snow—which was now above their knees in the track, and of unknown depth elsewhere—and they were still labouring upward and onward through the most frightful part of that tremendous desolation, when snow began to fall. At first, but a few flakes descended slowly and steadily. After a little while the fall grew much denser, and suddenly it began without apparent cause to whirl itself into spiral shapes. Instantly ensuing upon this last change, an icy blast came roaring at them, and every sound and force imprisoned until now was let loose.

One of the dismal galleries through which the road is carried at that perilous point, a cave eked out by arches of great strength, was near at hand. They struggled into it, and the storm raged wildly. The noise of the wind, the noise of the water, the thundering down of displaced masses of rock and snow, the awful voices with which not only that gorge but every gorge in the whole monstrous range seemed to be suddenly endowed, the darkness as of night, the violent revolving of the snow which beat and broke it into spray and blinded them, the madness of everything around insatiate for destruction, the rapid substitution of furious violence for unnatural calm, and hosts of appalling sounds for silence: these were things, on the edge of a deep abyss, to chill the blood, though the fierce wind, made actually solid by ice and snow, had failed to chill it.

Obenreizer, walking to and fro in the gallery without ceasing, signed to Vendale to help him unbuckle his knapsack. They could see each other, but could not have heard each other speak. Vendale complying, Obenreizer produced his bottle of wine, and poured some out, motioning Vendale to take that for warmth's sake, and not brandy. Vendale again complying, Obenreizer seemed to drink after him, and the two walked backwards and forwards side by side; both well knowing that to rest or sleep would be to die.

The snow came driving heavily into the gallery by the upper end at which they would pass out of it, if they ever passed out; for greater dangers lay on the road behind them than before. The snow soon began to choke the arch. An hour more, and it lay so high as to block out half of the returning daylight. But it froze hard now, as it fell, and could be clambered through or over. The violence of the mountain storm was gradually yielding to a steady snowfall. The wind still raged at intervals, but not incessantly; and when it paused, the snow fell in heavy flakes.

They might have been two hours in their frightful prison, when Obenreizer, now crunching into the mound, now creeping over it with his head bowed down and his body touching the top of the arch, made his way out. Vendale followed close upon him, but followed without clear motive or calculation. For the lethargy of Basle was creeping over him again, and mastering his senses.

How far he had followed out of the gallery, or with what obstacles he had since contended, he knew not. He became roused to the knowledge that Obenreizer had set upon him, and that they were struggling desperately in the snow. He became roused to the remembrance of what his assailant carried in a girdle. He felt for it, drew it, struck at him, struggled again, struck at him again, cast him off, and stood face to face with him.

"I promised to guide you to your journey's end," said Obenreizer, "and I have kept my promise. The journey of your life ends here. Nothing can prolong it. You are sleeping as you stand."

"You are a villain. What have you done to me?"

"You are a fool. I have drugged you. You are doubly a fool, for I drugged you once before upon the journey, to try you. You are trebly a fool, for I am the thief and forger, and in a few moments I shall take those proofs against the thief and forger from your insensible body."

The entrapped man tried to throw off the lethargy, but its fatal hold upon him was so sure that, even while he heard those words, he stupidly wondered which of them had been wounded, and whose blood it was that he saw sprinkled on the snow.

"What have I done to you," he asked, heavily and thickly, "that you should be—so base—a murderer?"

"Done to me? You would have destroyed me, but that you have come to your journey's end. Your cursed activity interposed between me, and the time I had counted on in which I might have replaced the money. Done to me? You have come in my way—not once, not twice, but again and again and again. Did I try to shake you off in the beginning, or no? You were not to be shaken off. Therefore you die here."

Vendale tried to think coherently, tried to speak coherently, tried to pick up the iron-shod staff he had let fall; failing to touch it, tried to stagger on without its aid. All in vain, all in vain! He stumbled, and fell heavily forward on the brink of the deep chasm.

Stupefied, dozing, unable to stand upon his feet, a veil before his eyes, his sense of hearing deadened, he made such a vigorous rally that, supporting himself on his hands, he saw his enemy standly calmly over him, and heard him speak.

"You call me murderer," said Obenreizer, with a grim laugh. "The name matters very little. But at least I have set my life against yours, for I am surrounded by dangers, and may never make my way out of this place. The *Tourmente* is rising again. The snow is on the whirl. I must have the papers now. Every moment has my life in it."

"Stop!" cried Vendale, in a terrible voice, staggering up with a last flash of fire breaking out of him, and clutching the thievish hands at his breast, in both of his. "Stop! Stand away from me! God bless my Marguerite! Happily she will never know how I died. Stand off from me, and let me look at your murderous

face. Let it remind me—of something—left to say."

The sight of him fighting so hard for his senses, and the doubt whether he might not for the instant be possessed by the strength of a dozen men, kept his opponent still. Wildly glaring at him, Vendale faltered out the broken words:

"It shall not be—the trust—of the dead—betrayed by me—reputed parents—misinherited fortune—see to it!"

As his head dropped on his breast, and he stumbled on the brink of the chasm as before, the thievish hands went once more, quick and busy, to his breast. He made a convulsive attempt to cry "No!" desperately rolled himself over into the gulf; and sank away from his enemy's touch, like a phantom in a dreadful dream.

The mountain storm raged again, and passed again. The awful mountain-voices died away, the moon rose, and the soft and silent snow fell.

Two men and two large dogs came out at the door of the Hospice. The men looked carefully around them, and up at the sky. The dogs rolled in the snow, and took it into their mouths, and cast it up with their paws.

One of the men said to the other: "We may venture now. We may find them in one of the five Refuges." Each fastened on his back, a basket; each took in his hand, a strong spiked pole; each girded under his arms, a looped end of a stout rope, so that they were tied together.

Suddenly the dogs desisted from their gambols in the snow, stood looking down the ascent, put their noses up, put their noses down, became greatly excited, and broke into a deep loud bay together.

The two men looked in the faces of the two dogs. The two dogs looked, with at least equal intelligence, in the faces of the two men.

"Au secours, then! Help! To the rescue!" cried the two men. The two dogs, with a glad, deep, generous bark, bounded away.

"Two more mad ones!" said the men, stricken motionless, and looking away into the moonlight. "Is it possible in such weather! And one of them a woman!"

Each of the dogs had the corner of a woman's dress in its mouth, and drew her along. She fondled their heads as she came up, and she came up through the snow with an accustomed tread. Not so the large man with her, who was spent and winded.

"Dear guides, dear friends of travellers! I am of your country. We seek two gentlemen crossing the Pass, who should have reached the Hospice this evening."

"They have reached it, ma'amselle."

"Thank Heaven! O thank Heaven!"

"But, unhappily, they have gone on again. We are setting forth to seek them even now. We had to wait until the *Tourmente* passed. It has been fearful up here."

"Dear guides, dear friends of travellers! Let me go with you. Let me go with you, for the love of God! One of those gentlemen is to be my husband. I love him, oh, so dearly. O so dearly! You see I am not faint, you see I am not tired. I am born a peasant girl. I will show you that I know well how to fasten myself to your ropes. I will do it with my own hands. I will swear to be brave and good. But let me go with you, let me go with you! If any mischance should have befallen him, my love would find him, when nothing else could. On my knees, dear friends of travellers! By the love your dear mothers had for your fathers!"

The good rough fellows were moved. "After all," they murmured to one another, "she speaks but the truth. She knows the ways of the mountains. See how marvellously she has come here! But as to Monsieur there, ma'amselle?"

"Dear Mr. Joey," said Marguerite, addressing him in his own tongue, "you will remain at the house, and wait for me; will you not?"

"If I know'd which o' you two recommended it," growled Joey Ladle, eyeing the two men with great indignation, "I'd fight you for sixpence, and give you half-a-crown towards your expenses. No, miss. I'll stick by you as long as there's any sticking left in me, and I'll die for you when I can't do better."

The state of the moon rendering it highly important that no time should be lost, and the dogs showing signs of great uneasiness, the two men quickly took their resolution. The rope that yoked them together was exchanged for a longer one; the party were secured, Marguerite second, and the Cellarman last; and they set out for the Refuges. The actual distance of those places was nothing; the whole five and the next Hospice to boot, being within two miles; but the ghastly way was whitened out and sheeted over.

They made no miss in reaching the Gallery where the two had taken shelter. The second storm of wind and snow had so wildly swept over it since, that their tracks were gone. But the dogs went to and fro with their noses down, and were confident. The party stopping, however, at the further arch, where the second storm had been especially furious, and where the drift was deep, the dogs became troubled, and went about and about, in quest of a lost purpose.

The great abyss being known to lie on the right, they wandered too much to the left, and had to regain the way with infinite labour through a deep field of snow. The leader of the line had stopped it, and was taking note of the landmarks, when one of the dogs fell to tearing up the snow a little before them. Advancing and stooping to look at it, thinking that some one might be overwhelmed there, they saw that it was stained, and that the stain was red.

The other dog was now seen to look over the brink of the gulf, with his fore legs straightened out, lest he should fall into it, and to tremble in every limb. Then the dog who had found the stained snow joined him, and then they ran to

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and fro, distressed and whining. Finally, they both stopped on the brink together, and setting up their heads, howled dolefully.

"There is some one lying below," said Marguerite.

"I think so," said the foremost man. "Stand well inward, the two last, and let us look over."

The last man kindled two torches from his basket, and handed them forward. The leader taking one, and Marguerite the other, they looked down: now shading the torches, now moving them to the right or left, now raising them, now depressing them, as moonlight far below contended with black shadows. A piercing cry from Marguerite broke a long silence.

"My God! On a projecting point, where a wall of ice stretches forward over the torrent, I see a human form!"

"Where, ma'amselle, where?"

"See, there! On the shelf of ice below the dogs!"

The leader, with a sickened aspect, drew inward, and they were all silent. But they were not all inactive, for Marguerite, with swift and skilful fingers, had detached both herself and him from the rope in a few seconds.

"Show me the baskets. These two are the only ropes?"

"The only ropes here, ma'amselle; but at the Hospice——"

"If he is alive—I know it is my lover—he will be dead before you can return. Dear Guides! Blessed friends of travellers! Look at me. Watch my hands. If they falter or go wrong, make me your prisoner by force. If they are steady and go right, help me to save him!"

She girded herself with a cord under the breast and arms, she formed it into a kind of jacket, she drew it into knots, she laid its end side by side with the end of the other cord, she twisted and twined the two together, she knotted them together, she set her foot upon the knots, she strained them, she held them for the two men to strain at.

"She is inspired," they said to one another.

"By the Almighty's mercy!" she exclaimed. "You both know that I am by far the lightest here. Give me the brandy and the wine, and lower me down to him. Then go for assistance and a stronger rope. You see that when it is lowered to me—look at this about me now—I can make it fast and safe to his body. Alive or dead, I will bring him up, or die with him. I love him passionately. Can I say more?"

They turned to her companion, but he was lying senseless on the snow.

"Lower me down to him," she said, taking two little kegs they had brought, and hanging them about her, "or I will dash myself to pieces! I am a peasant, and I know no giddiness or fear; and this is nothing to me, and I passionately love him. Lower me down!"

"Ma'amselle, ma'amselle, he must be dying or dead."

"Dying or dead, my husband's head shall lie upon my breast, or I will dash myself to pieces."

They yielded, overborne. With such precautions as their skill and the circumstances admitted, they let her slip from the summit, guiding herself down the precipitous icy wall with her hand, and they lowered down, and lowered down, and lowered down, until the cry came up: "Enough!"

"Is it really he, and is he dead?" they called down, looking over.

The cry came up: "He is insensible; but his heart beats. It beats against mine."

"How does he lie?"

The cry came up: "Upon a ledge of ice. It has thawed beneath him, and it will thaw beneath me. Hasten. If we die, I am content."

One of the two men hurried off with the dogs at such topmost speed as he could make; the other set up the lighted torches in the snow, and applied himself to recovering the Englishman. Much snow-chafing and some brandy got him on his legs, but delirious and quite unconscious where he was.

The watch remained upon the brink, and his cry went down continually: "Courage! They will soon be here. How goes it?" And the cry came up: "His heart still beats against mine. I warm him in my arms. I have cast off the rope, for the ice melts under us, and the rope would separate me from him; but I am not afraid."

The moon went down behind the mountain tops, and all the abyss lay in darkness. The cry went down: "How goes it?" The cry came up: "We are sinking lower, but his heart still beats against mine."

At length, the eager barking of the dogs, and a flare of light upon the snow, proclaimed that help was coming on. Twenty or thirty men, lamps, torches, litters, ropes, blankets, wood to kindle a great fire, restoratives and stimulants, came in fast. The dogs ran from one man to another, and from this thing to that, and ran to the edge of the abyss, dumbly entreating Speed, speed, speed!

The cry went down: "Thanks to God, all is ready. How goes it?"

The cry came up: "We are sinking still, and we are deadly cold. His heart no longer beats against mine. Let no one come down, to add to our weight. Lower the rope only."

The fire was kindled high, a great glare of torches lighted the sides of the precipice, lamps were lowered, a strong rope was lowered. She could be seen passing it round him, and making it secure.

The cry came up into a deathly silence: "Raise! Softly!" They could see her diminished figure shrink, as he was swung into the air.

They gave no shout when some of them laid him on a litter, and others lowered another strong rope. The cry again came up into a deathly silence: "Raise! Softly!" But when they caught her at the brink, then they shouted, then they wept, then they gave thanks to Heaven, then they kissed her feet, then they kissed her dress, then the dogs caressed her,

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licked her icy hands, and with their honest faces warmed her frozen bosom!

She broke from them all, and sank over him on his litter, with both her loving hands upon the heart that stood still.

Act IV.

THE CLOCK-LOCK.

The pleasant scene was Neuchâtel; the pleasant month was April; the pleasant place was a notary's office; the pleasant person in it was the notary: a rosy, hearty, handsome old man, chief notary of Neuchâtel, known far and wide in the canton as Maître Voigt. Professionally and personally, the notary was a popular citizen. His innumerable kindnesses and his innumerable oddities had for years made him one of the recognised public characters of the pleasant Swiss town. His long brown frock-coat and his black skull-cap were among the institutions of the place; and he carried a snuff-box which, in point of size, was popularly believed to be without a parallel in Europe.

There was another person in the notary's office, not so pleasant as the notary. This was Obenreizer.

An oddly pastoral kind of office it was, and one that would never have answered in England. It stood in a neat back yard, fenced off from a pretty flower-garden. Goats browsed in the doorway, and a cow was within half-a-dozen feet of keeping company with the clerk. Maître Voigt's room was a bright and varnished little room, with panelled walls, like a toy-chamber. According to the seasons of the year, roses, sunflowers, hollyhocks, peeped in at the windows. Maître Voigt's bees hummed through the office all the summer, in at this window and out at that, taking it frequently in their day's work, as if honey were to be made from Maître Voigt's sweet disposition. A large musical box on the chimney-piece, often trilled away at the Overture to Fra Diavolo, or a Selection from William Tell, with a chirruping liveliness that had to be stopped by force on the entrance of a client, and irrepressibly broke out again the moment his back was turned.

"Courage, courage, my good fellow!" said Maître Voigt, patting Obenreizer on the knee, in a fatherly and comforting way. "You will begin a new life to-morrow morning in my office here."

Obenreizer—dressed in mourning, and subdued in manner—lifted his hand, with a white handkerchief in it, to the region of his heart. "The gratitude is here," he said. "But the words to express it are not here."

"Ta-ta-ta! Don't talk to me about gratitude!" said Maître Voigt. "I hate to see a man oppressed. I see you oppressed, and I hold out my hand to you by instinct. Besides, I am not too old yet, to remember my young days. Your father sent me my first client. (It was on a question of half an acre of vineyard that seldom bore any grapes.) Do I owe nothing to your father's son? I owe him a debt of friendly obligation, and I pay it to you. That's rather neatly expressed, I think," added Maître Voigt, in high good humour with himself. "Permit me to reward my own merit with a pinch of snuff!"

Obenreizer dropped his eyes to the ground, as though he were not even worthy to see the notary take snuff

"Do me one last favour, sir," he said, when he raised his eyes. "Do not act on impulse. Thus far, you have only a general knowledge of my position. Hear the case for and against me, in its details, before you take me into your office. Let my claim on your benevolence be recognised by your sound reason as well as by your excellent heart. In *that* case, I may hold up my head against the bitterest of my enemies, and build myself a new reputation on the ruins of the character I have lost."

"As you will," said Maître Voigt. "You speak well, my son. You will be a fine lawyer one of these days."

"The details are not many," pursued Obenreizer. "My troubles begin with the accidental death of my late travelling companion, my lost dear friend, Mr. Vendale."

"Mr. Vendale," repeated the notary. "Just so. I have heard and read of the name, several times within these two months. The name of the unfortunate English gentleman who was killed on the Simplon. When you got that scar upon your cheek and neck."

"—From my own knife," said Obenreizer, touching what must have been an ugly gash at the time of its infliction.

"From your own knife," assented the notary, "and in trying to save him. Good, good, good. That was very good. Vendale. Yes. I have several times, lately, thought it droll that I should once have had a client of that name."

"But the world, sir," returned Obenreizer, "is *so* small!" Nevertheless he made a mental note that the notary had once had a client of that name.

"As I was saying, sir, the death of that dear travelling comrade begins my troubles. What follows? I save myself. I go down to Milan. I am received with coldness by Defresnier and Company. Shortly afterwards, I am discharged by Defresnier and Company. Why? They give no reason why. I ask, do they assail my honour? No answer. I ask, what is the imputation against me? No answer. I ask, where are their proofs against me? No answer. I ask, what am I to think? The reply is, 'M. Obenreizer is free to think what he will. What M. Obenreizer thinks, is of no importance to Defresnier and Company.' And that is all."

"Perfectly. That is all," assented the notary, taking a large pinch of snuff.

"But is that enough, sir?"

"That is not enough," said Maître Voigt. "The House of Defresnier are my fellow-townsmen—much respected, much esteemed—but the House of Defresnier must not silently destroy a man's character. You can rebut assertion. But how can you rebut silence?"

"Your sense of justice, my dear patron," answered Obenreizer, "states in a word the

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cruelty of the case. Does it stop there? No. For, what follows upon that?"

"True, my poor boy," said the notary, with a comforting nod or two; "your ward rebels upon that."

"Rebels is too soft a word," retorted Obenreizer. "My ward revolts from me with horror. My ward defies me. My ward withdraws herself from my authority, and takes shelter (Madame Dor with her) in the house of that English lawyer, Mr. Bintrey, who replies to your summons to her to submit herself to my authority, that she will not do so."

"—And who afterwards writes," said the notary, moving his large snuff-box to look among the papers underneath it for the letter, "that he is coming to confer with me."

"Indeed?" replied Obenreizer, rather checked. "Well, sir. Have I no legal rights?"

"Assuredly, my poor boy," returned the notary. "All but felons have their legal rights."

"And who calls me felon?" said Obenreizer, fiercely.

"No one. Be calm under your wrongs. If the House of Defresnier would call you felon, indeed, we should know how to deal with them."

While saying these words, he had handed Bintrey's very short letter to Obenreizer, who now read it and gave it back.

"In saying," observed Obenreizer with recovered composure, "that he is coming to confer with you, this English lawyer means that he is coming to deny my authority over my ward."

"You think so?"

"I am sure of it. I know him. He is obstinate and contentious. You will tell me, my dear sir, whether my authority is unassailable, until my ward is of age?"

"Absolutely unassailable."

"I will enforce it. I will make her submit herself to it. For," said Obenreizer, changing his angry tone to one of grateful submission, "I owe it to you, sir; to you, who have so confidingly taken an injured man under your protection, and into your employment."

"Make your mind easy," said Maître Voigt. "No more of this now, and no thanks! Be here to-morrow morning, before the other clerk comes—between seven and eight. You will find me in this room; and I will myself initiate you in your work. Go away! go away! I have letters to write. I won't hear a word more."

Dismissed with this generous abruptness, and satisfied with the favourable impression he had left on the old man's mind, Obenreizer was at leisure to revert to the mental note he had made that Maître Voigt once had a client whose name was Vendale.

"I ought to know England well enough by this time;" so his meditations ran, as he sat on a bench in the yard; "and it is not a name I ever encountered there, except—" he looked involuntarily over his shoulder—"as *his* name. Is the world so small that I cannot get away from him, even now when he is dead? He confessed at the last that he had betrayed the trust of the dead, and misinherited a fortune. And I was to see to it. And I was to stand off, that my face might remind him of it. Why *my* face, unless it concerned *me*? I am sure of his words, for they have been in my ears ever since. Can there be anything bearing on them, in the keeping of this old idiot? Anything to repair my fortunes, and blacken his memory? He dwelt upon my earliest remembrances, that night at Basle. Why, unless he had a purpose in it?"

Maître Voigt's two largest he-goats were butting at him to butt him out of the place, as if for that disrespectful mention of their master. So he got up and left the place. But he walked alone for a long time on the border of the lake, with his head drooped in deep thought.

Between seven and eight next morning, he presented himself again at the office. He found the notary ready for him, at work on some papers which had come in on the previous evening. In a few clear words, Maître Voigt explained the routine of the office, and the duties Obenreizer would be expected to perform. It still wanted five minutes to eight, when the preliminary instructions were declared to be complete.

"I will show you over the house and the offices," said Maître Voigt, "but I must put away these papers first. They come from the municipal authorities, and they must be taken special care of."

Obenreizer saw his chance, here, of finding out the repository in which his employer's private papers were kept.

"Can't I save you the trouble, sir?" he asked. "Can't I put those documents away under your directions?"

Maître Voigt laughed softly to himself; closed the portfolio in which the papers had been sent to him; handed it to Obenreizer.

"Suppose you try," he said. "All my papers of importance are kept yonder."

He pointed to a heavy oaken door, thickly studded with nails, at the lower end of the room. Approaching the door, with the portfolio, Obenreizer discovered, to his astonishment, that there were no means whatever of opening it from the outside. There was no handle, no bolt, no key, and (climax of passive obstruction!) no keyhole.

"There is a second door to this room?" said Obenreizer, appealing to the notary.

"No," said Maître Voigt. "Guess again."

"There is a window?"

"Nothing of the sort. The window has been bricked up. The only way in, is the way by that door. Do you give it up?" cried Maître Voigt, in high triumph. "Listen, my good fellow, and tell me if you hear nothing inside?"

Obenreizer listened for a moment, and started back from the door.

"I know!" he exclaimed. "I heard of this when I was apprenticed here at the watchmaker's. Perrin Brothers have finished their famous clock-lock at last—and you have got it?"

"Bravo!" said Maître Voigt. "The clock-lock it is! There, my son! There you have one

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more of what the good people of this town call, 'Daddy Voigt's follies.' With all my heart! Let those laugh who win. No thief can steal *my* keys. No burglar can pick *my* lock. No power on earth, short of a battering-ram or a barrel of gunpowder, can move that door, till my little sentinel inside—my worthy friend who goes 'Tick, Tick,' as I tell him—says, 'Open!' The big door obeys the little Tick, Tick, and the little Tick, Tick, obeys *me*. That!" cried Daddy Voigt, snapping his fingers, "for all the thieves in Christendom!"

"May I see it in action?" asked Obenreizer. "Pardon my curiosity, dear sir! You know that I was once a tolerable worker in the clock trade."

"Certainly you shall see it in action," said Maître Voigt. "What is the time now? One minute to eight. Watch, and in one minute you will see the door open of itself."

In one minute, smoothly and slowly and silently, as if invisible hands had set it free, the heavy door opened inward, and disclosed a dark chamber beyond. On three sides, shelves filled the walls, from floor to ceiling. Arranged on the shelves, were rows upon rows of boxes made in the pretty inlaid woodwork of Switzerland, and bearing inscribed on their fronts (for the most part in fanciful coloured letters) the names of the notary's clients.

Maître Voigt lighted a taper, and led the way into the room.

"You shall see the clock," he said, proudly. "I possess the greatest curiosity in Europe. It is only a privileged few whose eyes can look at it. I give the privilege to your good father's son—you shall be one of the favoured few who enter the room with me. See! here it is, on the right-hand wall at the side of the door."

"An ordinary clock," exclaimed Obenreizer. "No! Not an ordinary clock. It has only one hand."

"Aha!" said Maître Voigt. "Not an ordinary clock, my friend. No, no. That one hand goes round the dial. As I put it, so it regulates the hour at which the door shall open. See! The hand points to eight. At eight the door opened, as you saw for yourself."

"Does it open more than once in the four-and-twenty hours?" asked Obenreizer.

"More than once?" repeated the notary, with great scorn. "You don't know, my good friend, Tick Tick! He will open the door as often as I ask him. All he wants, is his directions, and he gets them here. Look below the dial. Here is a half-circle of steel let into the wall, and here is a hand (called the regulator) that travels round it, just as *my* hand chooses. Notice, if you please, that there are figures to guide me on the half-circle of steel. Figure I. means: Open once in the four-and-twenty hours. Figure II. means: Open twice; and so on to the end. I set the regulator every morning, after I have read my letters, and when I know what my day's work is to be. Would you like to see me set it now? What is to-day? Wednesday. Good! This is the day of our rifle-club; there is little business to do; I grant a half-holiday. No work here to-day, after three o'clock. Let us first put away this portfolio of municipal papers. There! No need to trouble Tick-Tick to open the door until eight to-morrow. Good! I leave the dial-hand at eight; I put back the regulator to 'I.;' I close the door; and closed the door remains, past all opening by anybody, till to-morrow morning at eight."

Obenreizer's quickness instantly saw the means by which he might make the clock-lock betray its master's confidence, and place its master's papers at his disposal.

"Stop, sir!" he cried, at the moment when the notary was closing the door. "Don't I see something moving among the boxes—on the floor there?"

(Maître Voigt turned his back for a moment to look. In that moment, Obenreizer's ready hand put the regulator on, from the figure 'I.' to the figure 'II.' Unless the notary looked again at the half-circle of steel, the door would open at eight that evening, as well as at eight next morning, and nobody but Obenreizer would know it.)

"There is nothing!" said Maître Voigt. "Your troubles have shaken your nerves, my son. Some shadow thrown by my taper; or some poor little beetle, who lives among the old lawyer's secrets, running away from the light. Hark! I hear your fellow-clerk in the office. To work! to work! and build to-day the first step that leads to your new fortunes!"

He good humouredly pushed Obenreizer out before him; extinguished the taper, with a last fond glance at his clock which passed harmlessly over the regulator beneath; and closed the oaken door.

At three, the office was shut up. The notary and everybody in the notary's employment, with one exception, went to see the rifle-shooting. Obenreizer had pleaded that he was not in spirits for a public festival. Nobody knew what had become of him. It was believed that he had slipped away for a solitary walk.

The house and offices had been closed but a few minutes, when the door of a shining wardrobe, in the notary's shining room, opened, and Obenreizer stepped out. He walked to a window, unclosed the shutters, satisfied himself that he could escape unseen by way of the garden, turned back into the room, and took his place in the notary's easy chair. He was locked up in the house, and there were five hours to wait before eight o'clock came.

He wore his way through the five hours: some times reading the books and newspapers that lay on the table: sometimes thinking: sometimes walking to and fro. Sunset came on. He closed the window-shutters before he kindled a light. The candle lighted, and the time drawing nearer and nearer, he sat, watch in hand, with his eyes on the oaken door.

At eight, smoothly and softly and silently the door opened.

One after another, he read the names on the outer rows of boxes. No such name as Vendale! He removed the outer row,

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and looked at the row behind. These were older boxes, and shabbier boxes. The four first that he examined, were inscribed with French and German names. The fifth bore a name which was almost illegible. He brought it out into the room, and examined it closely. There, covered thickly with time-stains and dust, was the name: "Vendale."

The key hung to the box by a string. He unlocked the box, took out four loose papers that were in it, spread them open on the table, and began to read them. He had not so occupied a minute, when his face fell from its expression of eagerness and avidity, to one of haggard astonishment and disappointment. But, after a little consideration, he copied the papers. He then replaced the papers, replaced the box, closed the door, extinguished the candle, and stole away.

As his murderous and thievish footfall passed out of the garden, the steps of the notary and some one accompanying him stopped at the front door of the house. The lamps were lighted in the little street, and the notary had his door-key in his hand.

"Pray do not pass my house, Mr. Bintrey," he said. "Do me the honour to come in. It is one of our town half-holidays—our Tir—but my people will be back directly. It is droll that you should ask your way to the Hotel of me. Let us eat and drink before you go there."

"Thank you; not to-night," said Bintrey. "Shall I come to you at ten to-morrow?"

"I shall be enchanted, sir, to take so early an opportunity of redressing the wrongs of my injured client," returned the good notary.

"Yes," retorted Bintrey; "your injured client is all very well—but—a word in your ear."

He whispered to the notary, and walked off. When the notary's housekeeper came home, she found him standing at his door motionless, with the key still in his hand, and the door unopened.

OBENREIZER'S VICTORY.

The scene shifts again—to the foot of the Simplon, on the Swiss side.

In one of the dreary rooms of the dreary little inn at Brieg, Mr. Bintrey and Maître Voigt sat together at a professional council of two. Mr. Bintrey was searching in his despatch-box. Maître Voigt was looking towards a closed door, painted brown to imitate mahogany, and communicating with an inner room.

"Isn't it time he was here?" asked the notary, shifting his position, and glancing at a second door at the other end of the room, painted yellow to imitate deal.

"He *is* here," answered Bintrey, after listening for a moment.

The yellow door was opened by a waiter, and Obenreizer walked in.

After greeting Maître Voigt with a cordiality which appeared to cause the notary no little embarrassment, Obenreizer bowed with grave and distant politeness to Bintrey. "For what reason have I been brought from Neuchâtel to the foot of the mountain?" he inquired, taking the seat which the English lawyer had indicated to him.

"You shall be quite satisfied on that head before our interview is over," returned Bintrey. "For the present, permit me to suggest proceeding at once to business. There has been a correspondence, Mr. Obenreizer, between you and your niece. I am here to represent your niece."

"In other words, you, a lawyer, are here to represent an infraction of the law."

"Admirably put!" said Bintrey. "If all the people I have to deal with were only like you, what an easy profession mine would be! I am here to represent an infraction of the law—that is your point of view. I am here to make a compromise between you and your niece—that is my point of view."

"There must be two parties to a compromise," rejoined Obenreizer. "I decline, in this case, to be one of them. The law gives me authority to control my niece's actions, until she comes of age. She is not yet of age; and I claim my authority."

At this point Maître Voigt attempted to speak. Bintrey silenced him with a compassionate indulgence of tone and manner, as if he was silencing a favourite child.

"No, my worthy friend, not a word. Don't excite yourself unnecessarily; leave it to me." He turned, and addressed himself again to Obenreizer. "I can think of nothing comparable to you, Mr. Obenreizer, but granite—and even that wears out in course of time. In the interests of peace and quietness—for the sake of your own dignity—relax a little. If you will only delegate your authority to another person whom I know of, that person may be trusted never to lose sight of your niece, night or day!"

"You are wasting your time and mine," returned Obenreizer. "If my niece is not rendered up to my authority within one week from this day, I invoke the law. If you resist the law, I take her by force."

He rose to his feet as he said the last word. Maître Voigt looked round again towards the brown door which led into the inner room.

"Have some pity on the poor girl," pleaded Bintrey. "Remember how lately she lost her lover by a dreadful death! Will nothing move you?"

"Nothing."

Bintrey, in his turn, rose to his feet, and looked at Maître Voigt. Maître Voigt's hand, resting on the table, began to tremble. Maître Voigt's eyes remained fixed, as if by irresistible fascination, on the brown door. Obenreizer, suspiciously observing him, looked that way too.

"There is somebody listening in there!" he exclaimed, with a sharp backward glance at Bintrey.

"There are two people listening," answered Bintrey.

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"Who are they?"

"You shall see."

With that answer, he raised his voice and spoke the next words—the two common words which are on everybody's lips, at every hour of the day: "Come in!"

The brown door opened. Supported on Marguerite's arm—his sunburnt colour gone, his right arm bandaged and slung over his breast—Vendale stood before the murderer, a man risen from the dead.

In the moment of silence that followed, the singing of a caged bird in the courtyard outside was the one sound stirring in the room. Maître Voigt touched Bintrey, and pointed to Obenreizer. "Look at him!" said the notary, in a whisper.

The shock had paralysed every movement in the villain's body, but the movement of the blood. His face was like the face of a corpse. The one vestige of colour left in it was a livid purple streak which marked the course of the scar, where his victim had wounded him on the cheek and neck. Speechless, breathless, motionless alike in eye and limb, it seemed as if, at the sight of Vendale, the death to which he had doomed Vendale had struck him where he stood.

"Somebody ought to speak to him," said Maître Voigt. "Shall I?"

Even at that moment, Bintrey persisted in silencing the notary, and in keeping the lead in the proceedings to himself. Checking Maître Voigt by a gesture, he dismissed Marguerite and Vendale in these words:—"The object of your appearance here is answered," he said. "If you will withdraw for the present, it may help Mr. Obenreizer to recover himself."

It did help him. As the two passed through the door, and closed it behind them, he drew a deep breath of relief. He looked round him for the chair from which he had risen, and dropped into it.

"Give him time!" pleaded Maître Voigt.

"No," said Bintrey. "I don't know what use he may make of it, if I do." He turned once more to Obenreizer, and went on. "I owe it to myself," he said—"I don't admit, mind, that I owe it to *you*—to account for my appearance in these proceedings, and to state what has been done under my advice, and on my sole responsibility. Can you listen to me?"

"I can listen to you."

"Recal the time when you started for Switzerland with Mr. Vendale," Bintrey began. "You had not left England four-and-twenty hours, before your niece committed an act of imprudence which not even your penetration could foresee. She followed her promised husband on his journey, without asking anybody's advice or permission, and without any better companion to protect her than a Cellarman in Mr. Vendale's employment."

"Why did she follow me on the journey? and how came the Cellarman to be the person who accompanied her?"

"She followed you on the journey," answered Bintrey, "because she suspected there had been some serious collision between you and Mr. Vendale, which had been kept secret from her; and because she rightly believed you to be capable of serving your interests, or of satisfying your enmity, at the price of a crime. As for the Cellarman, he was one, among the other people in Mr. Vendale's establishment, to whom she had applied (the moment your back was turned) to know if anything had happened between their master and you. The Cellarman alone had something to tell her. A senseless superstition, and a common accident which had happened to his master, in his master's cellar, had connected Mr. Vendale in this man's mind with the idea of danger by murder. Your niece surprised him into a confession, which aggravated tenfold the terrors that possessed her. Aroused to a sense of the mischief he had done, the man, of his own accord, made the one atonement in his power. 'If my master is in danger, miss,' he said, 'it's my duty to follow him, too; and it's more than my duty to take care of *you*.' The two set forth together—and, for once, a superstition has had its use. It decided your niece on taking the journey; and it led the way to saving a man's life. Do you understand me, so far?"

"I understand you, so far."

"My first knowledge of the crime that you had committed," pursued Bintrey, "came to me in the form of a letter from your niece. All you need know is that her love and her courage recovered the body of your victim, and aided the after-efforts which brought him back to life. While he lay helpless at Brieg, under her care, she wrote to me to come out to him. Before starting, I informed Madame Dor that I knew Miss Obenreizer to be safe, and knew where she was. Madame Dor informed me, in return, that a letter had come for your niece, which she knew to be in your handwriting. I took possession of it, and arranged for the forwarding of any other letters which might follow. Arrived at Brieg, I found Mr. Vendale out of danger, and at once devoted myself to hastening the day of reckoning with you. Defresnier and Company turned you off on suspicion; acting on information privately supplied by me. Having stripped you of your false character, the next thing to do was to strip you of your authority over your niece. To reach this end, I not only had no scruple in digging the pitfall under your feet in the dark—I felt a certain professional pleasure in fighting you with your own weapons. By my advice, the truth has been carefully concealed from you, up to this day. By my advice, the trap into which you have walked was set for you (you know why, now, as well as I do) in this place. There was but one certain way of shaking the devilish self-control which has hitherto made you a formidable man. That way has been tried, and (look at me as you may) that way has succeeded. The last thing that remains to be done," concluded Bintrey, producing two little slips of manuscript from his despatch-box, "is to set your niece free. You

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have attempted murder, and you have committed forgery and theft. We have the evidence ready against you in both cases. If you are convicted as a felon, you know as well as I do what becomes of your authority over your niece. Personally, I should have preferred taking that way out of it. But considerations are pressed on me which I am not able to resist, and this interview must end, as I have told you already, in a compromise. Sign those lines, resigning all authority over Miss Obenreizer, and pledging yourself never to be seen in England or in Switzerland again; and I will sign an indemnity which secures you against further proceedings on our part."

Obenreizer took the pen, in silence, and signed his niece's release. On receiving the indemnity in return, he rose, but made no movement to leave the room. He stood looking at Maître Voigt with a strange smile gathering at his lips, and a strange light flashing in his filmy eyes.

"What are you waiting for?" asked Bintrey.

Obenreizer pointed to the brown door. "Call them back," he answered. "I have something to say in their presence before I go."

"Say it in my presence," retorted Bintrey. "I decline to call them back."

Obenreizer turned to Maître Voigt. "Do you remember telling me that you once had an English client named Vendale?" he asked.

"Well," answered the notary. "And what of that?"

"Maître Voigt, your clock-lock has betrayed you."

"What do you mean?"

"I have read the letters and certificates in your client's box. I have taken copies of them. I have got the copies here. Is there, or is there not, a reason for calling them back?"

For a moment the notary looked to and fro, between Obenreizer and Bintrey, in helpless astonishment. Recovering himself, he drew his brother-lawyer aside, and hurriedly spoke a few words close at his ear. The face of Bintrey—after first faithfully reflecting the astonishment on the face of Maître Voigt—suddenly altered its expression. He sprang, with the activity of a young man, to the door of the inner room, entered it, remained inside for a minute, and returned followed by Marguerite and Vendale.

"Now, Mr. Obenreizer," said Bintrey, "the last move in the game is yours. Play it."

"Before I resign my position as that young lady's guardian," said Obenreizer, "I have a secret to reveal in which she is interested. In making my disclosure, I am not claiming her attention for a narrative which she, or any other person present, is expected to take on trust. I am possessed of written proofs, copies of originals, the authenticity of which Maître Voigt himself can attest. Bear that in mind, and permit me to refer you, at starting, to a date long past—the month of February, in the year one thousand eight hundred and thirty-six."

"Mark the date, Mr. Vendale," said Bintrey.

"My first proof," said Obenreizer, taking a paper from his pocket-book. "Copy of a letter, written by an English lady (married) to her sister, a widow. The name of the person writing the letter I shall keep suppressed until I have done. The name of the person to whom the letter is written I am willing to reveal. It is addressed to 'Mrs. Jane Ann Miller, of Groombridge-wells, England."

Vendale started, and opened his lips to speak. Bintrey instantly stopped him, as he had stopped Maître Voigt. "No," said the pertinacious lawyer. "Leave it to me."

Obenreizer went on:

"It is needless to trouble you with the first half of the letter," he said. "I can give the substance of it in two words. The writer's position at the time is this. She has been long living in Switzerland with her husband—obliged to live there for the sake of her husband's health. They are about to move to a new residence on the Lake of Neuchâtel in a week, and they will be ready to receive Mrs. Miller as visitor in a fortnight from that time. This said, the writer next enters into an important domestic detail. She has been childless for years—she and her husband have now no hope of children; they are lonely; they want an interest in life; they have decided on adopting a child. Here the important part of the letter begins; and here, therefore, I read it to you word for word."

He folded back the first page of the letter and read as follows:

"* * * Will you help us, my dear sister, to realise our new project? As English people, we wish to adopt an English child. This may be done, I believe, at the Foundling: my husband's lawyers in London will tell you how. I leave the choice to you, with only these conditions attached to it—that the child is to be an infant under a year old, and is to be a boy. Will you pardon the trouble I am giving you, for my sake; and will you bring our adopted child to us, with your own children, when you come to Neuchâtel?

"I must add a word as to my husband's wishes in this matter. He is resolved to spare the child whom we make our own, any future mortification and loss of self-respect which might be caused by a discovery of his true origin. He will bear my husband's name, and he will be brought up in the belief that he is really our son. His inheritance of what we have to leave will be secured to him—not only according to the laws of England in such cases, but according to the laws of Switzerland also; for we have lived so long in this country, that there is a doubt whether we may not be considered as 'domiciled' in Switzerland. The one precaution left to take is to prevent any after-discovery at the Foundling. Now, our name is a very uncommon one; and if we appear on the Register of the Institution, as the persons adopting the child, there is just a chance that something might result from it. Your name, my dear, is the name of thousands of other people; and if *you* will consent to appear on the Register, there need be no fear of any discoveries in that quarter. We are moving, by the doctor's orders, to a part of Switzerland in which our circumstances

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are quite unknown; and you, as I understand, are about to engage a new nurse for the journey when you come to see us. Under these circumstances, the child may appear as my child, brought back to me under my sister's care. The only servant we take with us from our old home is my own maid, who can be safely trusted. As for the lawyers in England and in Switzerland, it is their profession to keep secrets—and we may feel quite easy in that direction. So there you have our harmless little conspiracy! Write by return of post, my love, and tell me you will join it." * * * *

"Do you still conceal the name of the writer of that letter?" asked Vendale.

"I keep the name of the writer till the last," answered Obenreizer, "and I proceed to my second proof—a mere slip of paper, this time, as you see. Memorandum given to the Swiss lawyer, who drew the documents referred to in the letter I have just read, expressed as follows:—'Adopted from the Foundling Hospital of England, 3rd March, 1836, a male infant, called, in the Institution, Walter Wilding. Person appearing on the register, as adopting the child, Mrs. Jane Anne Miller, widow, acting in this matter for her married sister, domiciled in Switzerland.' Patience!" resumed Obenreizer, as Vendale, breaking loose from Bintrey, started to his feet. "I shall not keep the name concealed much longer. Two more little slips of paper, and I have done. Third proof! Certificate of Doctor Ganz, still living in practice at Neuchâtel, dated July, 1838. The doctor certifies (you shall read it for yourselves directly), first, that he attended the adopted child in its infant maladies; second, that, three months before the date of the certificate, the gentleman adopting the child as his son died; third, that *on* the date of the certificate, his widow and her maid, taking the adopted child with them, left Neuchâtel on their return to England. One more link now added to this, and my chain of evidence is complete. The maid remained with her mistress till her mistress's death, only a few years since. The maid can swear to the identity of the adopted infant, from his childhood to his youth—from his youth to his manhood, as he is now. There is her address in England—and there, Mr. Vendale, is the fourth, and final proof!"

"Why do you address yourself to *me?*" said Vendale, as Obenreizer threw the written address on the table.

Obenreizer turned on him, in a sudden frenzy of triumph.

"*Because you are the man!* If my niece marries you, she marries a bastard, brought up by public charity. If my niece marries you, she marries an impostor, without name or lineage, disguised in the character of a gentleman of rank and family."

"Bravo!" cried Bintrey. "Admirably put, Mr. Obenreizer! It only wants one word more to complete it. She marries—thanks entirely to your exertions—a man who inherits a handsome fortune, and a man whose origin will make him prouder than ever of his peasant-wife. George Vendale, as brother-executors, let us congratulate each other! Our dear dead friend's last wish on earth is accomplished. We have found the lost Walter Wilding. As Mr. Obenreizer said just now—you are the man!"

The words passed by Vendale unheeded. For the moment he was conscious of but one sensation; he heard but one voice. Marguerite's hand was clasping his. Marguerite's voice was whispering to him: "I never loved you, George, as I love you now!"

THE CURTAIN FALLS.

May-Day. There is merry-making in Cripple Corner, the chimneys smoke, the patriarchal dining-hall is hung with garlands, and Mrs. Goldstraw, the respected housekeeper, is very busy. For, on this bright morning the young master of Cripple Corner is married to its young mistress, far away: to wit, in the little town of Brieg, in Switzerland, lying at the foot of the Simplon Pass where she saved his life.

The bells ring gaily in the little town of Brieg, and flags are stretched across the street, and rifle shots are heard, and sounding music from brass instruments. Streamer-decorated casks of wine have been rolled out under a gay awning in the public way before the Inn, and there will be free feasting and revelry. What with bells and banners, draperies hanging from windows, explosion of gunpowder, and reverberation of brass music, the little town of Brieg is all in a flutter, like the hearts of its simple people.

It was a stormy night last night, and the mountains are covered with snow. But the sun is bright to-day, the sweet air is fresh, the tin spires of the little town of Brieg are burnished silver, and the Alps are ranges of far-off white cloud in a deep blue sky.

The primitive people of the little town of Brieg have built a greenwood arch across the street, under which the newly married pair shall pass in triumph from the church. It is inscribed, on that side, "HONOUR AND LOVE TO MARGUERITE VENDALE!" for the people are proud of her to enthusiasm. This greeting of the bride under her new name is affectionately meant as a surprise, and therefore the arrangement has been made that she, unconscious why, shall be taken to the Church by a tortuous back way. A scheme not difficult to carry into execution in the crooked little town of Brieg.

So, all things are in readiness, and they are to go and come on foot. Assembled in the Inn's best chamber, festively adorned, are the bride and bridegroom, the Neuchâtel notary, the London lawyer, Madame Dor, and a certain large mysterious Englishman, popularly known as Monsieur Zhoé-Ladelle. And behold Madame Dor, arrayed in a spotless pair of gloves of her own, with no hand in the air, but both hands clasped round the neck of the bride; to embrace whom Madame Dor has turned her broad back on the company, consistent to the last.

"Forgive me, my beautiful," pleads Madame Dor, "for that I ever was his she-cat!"

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"She-cat, Madame Dor?"

"Engaged to sit watching my so charming mouse," are the explanatory words of Madame Dor, delivered with a penitential sob.

"Why, you were our best friend! George, dearest, tell Madame Dor. Was she not our best friend?"

"Undoubtedly, darling. What should we have done without her?"

"You are both so generous," cries Madame Dor, accepting consolation, and immediately relapsing. "But I commenced as a she-cat."

"Ah! But like the cat in the fairy-story, good Madame Dor," says Vendale, saluting her cheek, "you were a true woman. And, being a true woman, the sympathy of your heart was with true love."

"I don't wish to deprive Madame Dor of her share in the embraces that are going on," Mr. Bintrey puts in, watch in hand, "and I don't presume to offer any objection to your having got yourselves mixed together, in the corner there, like the three Graces. I merely remark that I think it's time we were moving. What are *your* sentiments on that subject, Mr. Ladle?"

"Clear, sir," replies Joey, with a gracious grin. "I'm clearer altogether, sir, for having lived so many weeks upon the surface. I never was half so long upon the surface afore, and it's done me a power of good. At Cripple Corner, I was too much below it. Atop of the Simpleton, I was a deal too high above it. I've found the medium here, sir. And if ever I take it in convivial, in all the rest of my days, I mean to do it this day, to the toast of 'Bless 'em both.'"

"I, too!" says Bintrey. "And now, Monsieur Voigt, let you and me be two men of Marseilles, and alions, marchons, arm-in-arm!"

They go down to the door, where others are waiting for them, and they go quietly to the church, and the happy marriage takes place. While the ceremony is yet in progress, the notary is called out. When it is finished, he has returned, is standing behind Vendale, and touches him on the shoulder.

"Go to the side door, one moment, Monsieur Vendale. Alone. Leave Madame to me."

At the side door of the church, are the same two men from the Hospice. They are snow-stained and travel-worn. They wish him joy, and then each lays his broad hand upon Vendale's breast, and one says in a low voice, while the other steadfastly regards him:

"It is here, Monsieur. Your litter. The very same."

"My litter is here? Why?"

"Hush! For the sake of Madame. Your companion of that day——"

"What of him?"

The man looks at his comrade, and his comrade takes him up. Each keeps his hand laid earnestly on Vendale's breast.

"He had been living at the first Refuge, monsieur, for some days. The weather was now good, now bad."

"Yes?"

"He arrived at our Hospice the day before yesterday, and, having refreshed himself with sleep on the floor before the fire, wrapped in his cloak, was resolute to go on, before dark, to the next Hospice. He had a great fear of that part of the way, and thought it would be worse to-morrow."

"Yes?"

"He went on alone. He had passed the gallery, when an avalanche—like that which fell behind you near the Bridge of the Ganther——"

"Killed him?"

"We dug him out, suffocated and broken all to pieces! But, monsieur, as to Madame. We have brought him here on the litter, to be buried. We must ascend the street outside. Madame must not see. It would be an accursed thing to bring the litter through the arch across the street, until Madame has passed through. As you descend, we who accompany the litter will set it down on the stones of the street the second to the right, and will stand before it. But do not let Madame turn her head towards the street the second to the right. There is no time to lose. Madame will be alarmed by your absence. Adieu!"

Vendale returns to his bride, and draws her hand through his unmaimed arm. A pretty procession awaits them at the main door of the church. They take their station in it, and descend the street amidst the ringing of the bells, the firing of the guns, the waving of the flags, the playing of the music, the shouts, the smiles, and tears, of the excited town. Heads are uncovered as she passes, hands are kissed to her, all the people bless her. "Heaven's benediction on the dear girl! See where she goes in her youth and beauty; she who so nobly saved his life!"

Near the corner of the street the second to the right, he speaks to her, and calls her attention to the windows on the opposite side. The corner well passed, he says: "Do not look round, my darling, for a reason that I have," and turns his head. Then, looking back along the street, he sees the litter and its bearers passing up alone under the arch, as he and she and their marriage train go down towards the shining valley.

THE END OF THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER FOR 1867.

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